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The Epyllion

From Theocritus to Ovid

M. Marjorie Crump



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The Epyllion



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From Theocritus to Ovid

Thesis approved for the Degree of
Doctor of Literature in the
University of London

M. Marjorie Crump



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FROM THEOCRITUS TO OVID

*Thesis approved for the Degree of Doctor
of Literature in the University of London*

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THE EPYLLION FROM THEOCRITUS TO OVID

I

INTRODUCTORY

I

UNDER the general heading of Greek Epic it is customary to include a large number of poems and fragments of very various types. They are all written in the same metre and approximate more or less to the style consecrated to epic poetry and known as Homeric; they are narrative or partially narrative in form, and deal with persons and events of remote or legendary ages. But within these limits the scope of the Greek Epic is extraordinarily wide, embracing, as it does, such widely divergent forms as the *Iliad*, the Hesiodic Catalogue poems, the *Hymns* of Callimachus and the epic *Idylls* of Theocritus.

While it is impossible to date with certainty every individual example, yet every epic work of any importance may be ascribed to one of two groups, the first including all the works attributed by the ancients to Homer, Hesiod and the Cyclic poets, and the second the epics and epyllia of the Alexandrian Age. Between these two periods lies the great age of Attic literature which pro-

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duced no epic work of real importance. Doubtless epics appeared from time to time; indeed a few names of epic authors and their works have come down to us, the best known being that of Antimachus of Colophon, who wrote a *Thebais*, which obtained a certain reputation—of notoriety perhaps rather than of genuine fame. But none of these epics have survived, and even in their own time they probably had little significance. In considering the history of the epic they may be regarded as negligible.

Among the many problems connected with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, none is more remarkable than their isolation. Not only are they infinitely greater than any other ancient epic, but they are totally unlike any of them in character. It may be safely assumed on consideration of the evidence that they were as far removed from the lost epics as they are from any extant epic poem. The Cyclic and Hesiodic poets represent indeed a development of the Homeric tradition; the Alexandrian epic, however, shows a complete and a deliberate change. The *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius has nothing in common with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* except the most general characteristics of style. Still later the truth was forcibly stated by Vergil, who maintained that it was easier to steal his club from Hercules than a single line from Homer.¹ This isolation of the two great epics was felt all through the Attic period, as is proved by the

¹ "Asconius Pedianus libro, quem contra obrectatores Vergilii scripsit, pauca admodum obiecta ei proponit eaque circa historiam fere et quod pleraque ab Homero sumpsisset; sed hoc ipsum crimen sic defendere adusuetum ait: cur non illi quoque eadem furta temptarent? Verum intellecturos facilius esse Herculi clavam quam Homero versum subripere." (Suet., *Vit. Verg.*, 46.)

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tremendous reverence with which they were regarded, but it was perhaps not consciously laid down as a fact of literary history, until Callimachus and his school denounced those who would attempt to imitate Homer. Whether any great heroic epic preceded the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* we do not know, but it is certain that they are the last, if not the only poems of their kind. There is no reason to suppose that the Cyclic epics were more than imitations, which could not pretend to the beauty and vigour of their originals. The Homeric hymns and the Hesiodic poems, though attached to the Homeric tradition, are new developments of it. The long epics of a later age have perished with the sole exception of the *Argonautica*; and the *Argonautica* has survived in spite of its length, because, with all its faults, it is a great poem.

It is generally agreed that the heroic epic is the product of an age, when man's actions and emotions were restricted only by the custom of his associates, when legal codes were unknown and when the bounds of scientific possibility were undefined. The epic poet aims at creating an atmosphere of reality; but he is not therefore bound to abstain from the marvellous. The author of the wanderings of Odysseus had not experienced the adventures of his hero, but he did not regard them as necessarily impossible; there was infinite possibility of strange adventure on unknown seas.

The absence of detailed historical and scientific knowledge and of written records undoubtedly provided conditions suitable for epic writing. But the fact that the task was easier in such an age does not entirely account for the absence of great epics of the Homeric

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type in the later literature of Greece and in the whole of that of Rome. Nor does it account for the comparative rarity of long epics like the *Æneid*, which are entirely distinct from the Homeric type. For a full understanding of the attitude of the later ages towards epic it is necessary to consider briefly some of the causes which govern the production and decay of the heroic epic.

The first requisite for a great epic is a great poet. The comparative rarity of poets great enough to keep the interest of their hearers or readers sustained through a poem of some thousands of lines alone accounts for the scarcity of great epics. Whatever theory is held about the authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* it is clear that at least one poet of supreme genius was concerned in the composition of each of them. It is by no means impossible that several poets of equal power had a part in the present arrangement of the poems. Athens produced three great tragedians at the same time, and there is no difficulty in supposing that the age of the great epics produced more than one poet of outstanding power.

The second requisite is a historical or semi-historical subject; that is to say, that the author must base his work on a background of events which he believes to have occurred. If he uses a subject, in which the historical tradition has been preserved, more or less intact and without considerable addition, by a succession of narrators, the result will be of the type of the *Iliad*. But if the historical content has been overlaid and gradually obscured by a mass of traditions and folk-tales, he will produce a historical romance like the

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Odyssey.¹ His subject must, of course, be sufficiently remote in time to allow of addition without the possibility of contradiction, yet at the same time near enough to be of real interest to the audience for whom it is intended. It must, in fact, be a living tradition. It is here that the early epic writer enjoys a great advantage; he finds his sources in such a tradition, and he tells his own generation the history of ancestors not very far removed. He is near enough to their time to write convincingly of them, and yet far enough away to avoid argument and contradiction by eye-witnesses. As long as the actors themselves are dead, he need have no fear; for there are no written records and no historians to confute him.

The Cyclic poets who followed the Homeric period were less fortunate. No doubt the primary cause of the loss of their epics was lack of real genius in the writers. But their works can never have possessed the living interest of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Their object seems to have been to complete the Tale of Troy; and they added to the original tradition all the mass of legends which had grown up round it in after years, irrespective of their possibility in relation to the Homeric story. These

¹ I accept Dr. Leaf's conclusions on the historical aspect of the Homeric poems, as given in his *Troy* and his *Homer and History*. But the acceptance of his conclusions is not essential to the argument. The author of the *Iliad* was certainly dealing with a tradition accepted as historical, and though his material has obviously received additions, it has not been greatly modified by them. The more complex structure of the *Odyssey* presents a greater problem. We do not know whether the author took the story as he found it, or whether he added to an accepted tradition. But it is clear that at some period a considerable mass of extraneous matter has become attached to the original historical content.

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epics were historical in the sense that their authors seem to have been aiming at history; but the living tradition was gone, the history was unsound, the construction was necessarily weak, and there was no poetic inspiration to compensate for these defects. It is not surprising that the Cyclic epics did not survive; their principal interest to us to-day is that they supplied so many plots to the Attic tragedians.

While the Cyclic poets continued to follow the Homeric tradition, other poets were already developing new types; these are of great importance in studying the Alexandrian epic, for their influence in the Alexandrian period is very much stronger than that of the early epic.

On the mainland of Greece arose the form of epic known as Hesiodic, and including all the poems attributed by the ancients to Hesiod. These poems actually cover a considerable period, but are all of the same type. They are primarily didactic poems, composed for the purpose of giving instruction, like the *Works and Days*, or of keeping records, like the Catalogue poems. Into such poems epic passages might be inserted to vary the monotony, and it is significant that the only two considerable survivals of the Catalogues, namely the *Theogony* and the *Shield of Heracles*¹ are largely of a narrative character.

The catalogue epic is a new type, differing in every respect except language and metre from the Homeric

¹ The *Shield* with its long digression is curiously like an Alexandrian epyllion in form. It is evidently a composite work, since there is evidence that only the first fifty-three lines originally belonged to the Catalogue. It has little artistic merit, and probably had no special influence on later poems.

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epic. Its importance in the history of epic development consists in its substitution of short episodes for a single plot and in its frequent digressions. But there is another early epic form which undoubtedly had considerable influence on the later epic, namely the hymn.

The shorter Homeric hymns are merely preludes addressed to the gods before longer recitations; but the longer ones are really short epics, less majestic and more homely in tone than the heroic epics, each dealing with an incident in the life of a god or goddess.¹ These longer hymns seem to be somewhat later in date than the bulk of the Hesiodic poems, but they are probably not the earliest examples of their kind. The hymn, as a poem composed in honour of a god and used for religious purposes, is of necessity very old; but the Homeric hymns are not in any sense religious poems; they are really stories in verse, composed for the sake of amusement. The type would seem to be at least as old as the *Odyssey*, for the Lay of Demodocus does not essentially differ in spirit and treatment from the Homeric hymns, and it is significant that this poem is recited to amuse the guests of Alcinous. Possibly the recognition of the hymn as a separate literary form is later than Homer; but, whatever its date, we have in it a new type destined to be of permanent value—the short story in verse.

The hymns have none of the human and historical interest of the Homeric epic, but the treatment of the gods follows the Homeric tradition; it is graceful, light and often frankly irreverent; in the *Hymn to Hermes* the

¹ The *Hymn to Apollo*, with its two separate incidents, is probably a combination of two hymns.

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comic element is strongly marked.¹ The atmosphere is romantic; the characters move in an imaginary world, which has no concern with religion or morality. Probably the folk-tale was an important factor in the development of the hymn, for there are many folk-tale characteristics. We may see in the Homeric hymns the forerunners of romance.

The change of interest from historical to romantic is very important. It does not matter whether the authors of the hymns were deserting the historical epic consciously or not; their choice of subject and their treatment are none the less significant. We find here the recognition, perhaps unconscious, of the fact that the day of long epics was over. The old subjects were worn out by long use, and in any case the Cyclic poets had proved themselves inferior to Homer. With the advance of the city state and the beginning of records it was less easy to deal with recent history. Modern everyday life has never in any age supplied satisfactory subjects for long narrative poems. It remained for the epic to follow the lines indicated as early as the *Odyssey*, and concern itself with the world of fantasy.

The great period of Attic literature adds nothing of importance to the epic. New and more satisfactory literary types had grown up. Lyric poetry had developed, and a new form of narrative had been produced by the genius of Pindar. Athens welcomed the epic subjects, only to discover an original and wonderful treatment of them in the hands of her great dramatic poets. Finally the fate of the epic was sealed by the

¹ A further development of the comic element may be noted in the burlesques, the lost *Margites* and the extant *Batrachomyomachia*.

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development of a prose style. It became manifest that prose was the true medium of historical narrative, and that a prose work might be artistically great no less than a poem. The true successors of Homer were Herodotus and Thucydides. The Homeric epic had passed away and could not be revived; the Hesiodic epic and the Homeric hymns had so far produced no descendants; Greece was occupied with new forms of expression more suited to modern conditions, and such scattered specimens of epic as appeared at all seem to have been little read and soon neglected.

II

The Alexandrian age was a period of extensive literary production. Compared with the amount of work which actually appeared both in prose and verse, the writings which have come down to us are only a minute fraction of the whole. But enough remains, especially in the sphere of epic, to illustrate both the merits and the defects of the period, and to establish its relations with Greek literature of the past and with those Roman authors who drew from it to a great extent their forms and subjects.

The difference of spirit between the literature of Athens and that of Alexandria and the causes of the change are well known.¹ Under the new conditions induced by the spread of Hellenism and the growth of large cities, literature ceased to be produced for the general public,

¹ Cf. Alfred Croiset, *Histoire de la Littérature Grecque*. Tome V., C. I. Paris. 1901. The whole question is here most ably treated.

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and became the study of learned circles and the amusement of a limited audience. Literature may now be said to have become a profession, and the professional author had the option either of undertaking research in some branch of learning, or of composing such works as would appeal to a comparatively small public distinguished by a somewhat artificial culture. Thus, on the one hand, we have the critics, the scientists and the philosophers, on the other the poets and romance writers.

It was natural in the circumstances that the output of great original work should be small. The habit of regarding authorship as a profession to be followed successfully by those who are willing to conform to its rules does not tend to the production of the greatest work. It results no doubt in an increase of output, which in general maintains a good average of technical merit; but, by the very fact of conforming to fixed standards of taste, literature inclines to lose the tendency towards original thought. It is true that writers of genius are not circumscribed by external conditions; but the Alexandrian age had very few such writers, and the man of second-class ability suffered from his adherence to the principles of one school or another.

The Alexandrian poets, who regarded Callimachus as their leader, were primarily occupied with form and method. Imbued with the spirit of criticism which characterises this period, they attempted to write poetry by rule. It is noticeable that the more popular literary forms, apart from the didactic and catalogue poems, were short. Grand epic was regarded with disfavour, and was replaced by elegy, idyll and epyllion;

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similarly drama ceased to flourish and gave way to the short realistic mime; lyric poetry was mainly represented by the epigram. The motto of the age is contained in the well-known words of Callimachus : "A great book is a great evil."¹

The preference for short poems is partly due to the fact that the poets were now writing for readers and not for listeners. In a former age of recitation and a living drama the poet not only had an audience which wished to hear him, but also one which could become acquainted with his work without more effort than was required for listening. From a reading public more effort is required, and the poet's audience becomes proportionately smaller and less willing to give sustained attention. Public recitation in the Alexandrian period merely served the purpose of advertising a work which was intended for reading; it was no longer the sole way of reaching the audience.

Besides preferring that a poem should not be too long, the average reader is far more critical than the listener. A poem which is recited is, at most, heard on a few occasions only, and a really fine reciter can conceal many faults and imperfections, and make even a dull piece of work attractive. But a poem which is read has no external aids and is subjected to a much closer criticism. Thus of necessity form and detail become very important considerations. The Alexandrians, already naturally inclined to regard form as all important, were urged still further by the taste of a restricted and critical circle of readers.

The professional poet had two courses open to him:

¹ Call., fr. 359.

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he might aim at combining amusement with instruction or merely at amusing. If he were interested in some branch of learning, he would probably prefer to popularise it by following the Hesiodic tradition and producing a catalogue or didactic poem. It was essentially an age of research, and readers were quite willing to receive instruction provided that it came in an attractive form. Hence arose the didactic poems of Aratus and Nicander; but the Alexandrians were not destined to raise the didactic epic to any great height; that was reserved for their Roman successors. The man who aimed merely at amusement had an easier task in that he was not restricted in his subject; but he had none the less to consider his audience very carefully. He had to please, on the one hand, the scholars whose headquarters were the Library of Alexandria, and on the other, the court, which prided itself on its literary taste and constantly required new sensations. With such an audience Alexandrian poetry necessarily was characterised by displays of learning and by constant efforts to secure unusual or sensational effects. These two characteristics are everywhere present, and are responsible for many of the merits of this school of poets, as well as for its worst faults.

At its best Alexandrian learning is decidedly ornamental. In the *Idylls* of Theocritus, where it takes the form of allusion, it adds to the charm, and since it is kept subordinate, it does not interfere with the enjoyment of the uninstructed reader. Theocritus never over-emphasises his learning and introduces it only where it is appropriate; the purely rustic idylls are quite free from it. Apollonius, from the nature of his subject, had

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more opportunities of introducing learned ornament. He had undoubtedly a great interest in geography, and he displayed his knowledge freely in the *Argonautica*. But he had also a fine sense of the poetical value of strange and beautiful names, and, though his learning is at times monotonous, it is not irritating. Both poets are comparatively simple and straightforward in style, and subordinate learning to poetry.

Callimachus, on the other hand, frequently subordinates poetry to learning, and in his work we may see most clearly the merits and defects of his school. Most of his extant work is crowded with obscure names of persons and places, with allusions to myths unknown to any but scholars and, worst of all, with rare words and pedantic expressions. Yet he could write with exquisite simplicity, as is proved by the Heraclitus epigram¹ and by parts of the *Bath of Pallas*; fragments too of the lost *Hecale* show signs of the delicate realism which constitutes so much of the charm of Theocritus. Callimachus, indeed, is a typical figure, not only of his own, but of every age—a man of great ability and even a touch of genius, but in bondage to his own theories and the prevailing fashion. Without the genius, which in his best work saves Callimachus, the Alexandrian poet became merely a pedant striving after bizarre effects of style and language. At its worst Alexandrian poetry is a maze of pedantic obscurities and unintelligible allusions. The only complete example still remaining is the *Alexandra* of Lycophron, but there must have been many other writers, who had as much learning as Lycophron and no greater pretensions to genius.

¹ Call., *Ep.* ii.

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The fashion for learning affected not only the style, but also the choice of subject. Scholars searched their records for unknown myths, strange customs and marvels of all kinds. The idea of explaining some custom or ceremony, which appears in certain of the Attic tragedies, took firm root in Alexandrian poetry, and gave rise to the *Aitia* of Callimachus and to various poems dealing with *κρίσεις* or the founding of cities.

But it was not enough for poetry to be learned; to the scholar it might be satisfying to solve the latest puzzle of learned allusions; but the general public wanted something more. The reading public of the time, living comfortable, uneventful lives in prosperous cities, demanded that poetry should supply them with certain sensations and emotions lacking in their daily life.

This was a legitimate demand, and it found its answer. To the city dweller Theocritus gave his exquisite idylls of country life. To the man engaged in business and unable to leave his home Apollonius gave the romance of adventure, marvels and magic in far countries. In the pursuit of new effects new forms were discovered and new methods of treatment adopted. Realism became fashionable, and in Theocritus reached a point of perfection which has seldom been equalled.

So far the impulse to new effects produced good fruit; but the picture has a darker side. While readers of good taste were satisfied with adventure and romance, there were others, who were drawn by the love of morbid sensation to demand stories of the most hideous forms of crime and madness. The type of story considered suitable is well exemplified by Parthenius' collection of

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love romances, which are drawn mainly from Alexandrian sources.

We find, then, that the Alexandrian poets inclined to develop new forms, and generally to prefer short poems to long ones. Their work was, at its best, copiously adorned with learned allusions, at its worst, a mere vehicle for displays of pedantry. There was an increasing tendency to desert the old and well-known legends and to seek out or to invent new plots. Together with the desire for romantic and marvellous adventures, strange customs and foreign settings, arose a new and often delightful realism of treatment. At the same time the love of sensation often tended to become degraded and resulted in a morbid interest in unnatural passion and crime realistically treated. The Alexandrian epic in its various forms expresses very fully all these characteristics, and illustrates both the best and the worst of the literary tendencies of the age.

III

Any study of the tendencies and developments of Alexandrian literature is of necessity complicated by the fact that the chronology is very uncertain. The problem has been much discussed,¹ but, though the critics, on the whole, are agreed on certain general outlines, there

¹ A complete survey of the chronology with full quotation of all passages bearing on the problem will be found under the names of the various authors in Susemihl's *Geschichte der Griechischen Litteratur in der Alexandrinerzeit*. Leipzig. 1891. There is also an interesting discussion of the chronology in the second chapter of A. Couat's *La Poésie alexandrine sous les trois premiers Ptolémées*. Paris. 1882.

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is and can be no agreement with regard to details. Thus it is certain that Apollonius was considerably younger than Callimachus, but the date of his birth is variously placed between 296 and 260 B.C. It is obvious that, where there is so little possibility of certainty even about the lives of the poets, it is a hopeless task to attempt to determine with any accuracy the relative dates of particular poems. We need not consider the whole problem here; but it is impossible to approach the history of the epyllion without first briefly discussing the chronology of the period during which the earliest examples of the form were produced.

The first of the Alexandrian poets, Philetas of Cos, appears to have been born about 340 B.C. He probably wrote little epic, but his date is important as a starting point. He left Cos for Alexandria in 295 B.C. when he became tutor to Ptolemy Philadelphus, and he probably died not many years later, for there is no further mention of him. We do not know whether he ever returned to Cos, but he may have done so when his tutorship came to an end, perhaps in 292 B.C. For the purpose of the present problem the most important fact in his career is that either before 295 B.C. or after 292 B.C. he was at the head of a Coan school of poets, which included Theocritus and his friend Nicias the physician. This fact provides a starting point for the consideration of the life of Theocritus, since it gives an approximate date for his Coan period. He was living in Cos and associated with Philetas either shortly before 295 B.C. or shortly after 292 B.C.¹ He was presumably younger

¹ Couat holds that the Coan period was earlier than 295 B.C., Susemihl that it was after 292 B.C. Susemihl's contention rests on the identifica-

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than Philetas, and it is generally agreed that he was born about 315 B.C. He was by birth a Sicilian, and he is known to have lived at various periods in Sicily, in Cos and in Alexandria. His Alexandrian period is of the greatest importance in the history of the epyllion, but it cannot be dated with any certainty, for, though it is clear that some of the Idylls were written at Alexandria, there is little evidence of the exact time of writing. The *Hymn to Ptolemy* (*Id.*, xvii.) has been placed by some critics as early as 273 B.C., by others as late as 259 B.C. The latest view, however, places it before 270 B.C., since Arsinoe, who died in that year, is spoken of as still living.¹ Thus, it is fairly certain that Theocritus went to Alexandria before 270 B.C., probably in 273 B.C. There is no evidence of the length of his stay, and the date of his death is uncertain, but it is probable either that he was dead or had left Alexandria before the quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius, since there is no certain reference to that quarrel in his works.²

Callimachus causes less difficulty, since there is a little more evidence. The *Hymn to Zeus* may with some certainty be placed within the period 280-275 B.C., and Couat, working from this date, places his birth in

tion of Aratus, the author of the *Phaenomena*, with the Aratus, who was a member of the school of Philetas and a friend of Theocritus. This identification is unfortunately not certain. Cf. Mr. G. R. Mair's Introduction to *Aratus*, p. 362. Loeb Classical Library.

¹ See Dr. Mair's Introduction to the *Hymns* in the Loeb Edition of Callimachus, pp. 28-29.

² It is not necessary to refer *Id.*, vii. 45-48 to the quarrel. The statement is a general one and voices the belief of the whole Alexandrian age that Homer was not to be imitated.

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310-305 B.C. Aulus Gellius states that he was famous at the court of Ptolemy in 264 B.C.¹ But his reputation must have been established in Alexandria for some years before this. We have no direct evidence of his acquaintance with Theocritus,² but the two poets must have known and exercised an influence upon one another, and it is possible that their acquaintance belongs to a period before Callimachus reached the height of his fame. The unchallenged supremacy of his middle period is more easily explained if Theocritus had left Alexandria by 264 B.C.

To the student of Alexandrian epic the most important incident in the career of Callimachus is his quarrel with Apollonius. On this point we have a certain amount of information in the two *Lives of Apollonius*, but there is complete absence of any evidence which might serve to fix the date. From the fact that Apollonius was the pupil of Callimachus and that Callimachus was at the height of his reputation when the quarrel broke out, it is clear that Apollonius was much the younger of the two. Susemihl³ places his birth about 283 B.C., and it can hardly have been earlier than this, if the birth of Callimachus is correctly dated. It is, however, stated by Suidas⁴ that Apollonius succeeded Eratosthenes as head of the Alexandrian Library and was himself succeeded by Aristophanes of Byzantium. If this is true, he must have died about 195 B.C., and it is therefore possible

¹ Aul. Gell., *N.A.*, xvii. 21. Couat suggests that he first became connected with the Museum at this date.

² There is no proof that the Theocritus of Call., *Ep.* liii., is the poet.

³ Susemihl, p. 384, note 51.

⁴ Suidas s.v. Ἀπολλώνιος. Cf. A. Nauck. *Aristophanis Byzantii grammatici Alexandrini fragmenta*, p. 1. 1848.

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that his birth should be dated some years later than 283 B.C. Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* throws some light on the question, since the last nine lines clearly belong to the period of the quarrel. Susemihl¹ on internal evidence places the *Hymn* either in 263 B.C. or in 247 B.C. and accepts the earlier date on the ground that 247 B.C. is too late for the quarrel. If Apollonius was born in 283 B.C., Susemihl's contention must be accepted; but there is no proof of the date of his birth, and 267 B.C. is a more likely date for it in view of his librarianship.² In 247 B.C. Callimachus would have been some years over fifty and a poet of long established reputation. The whole story is obscure, but such details as we possess fall into place more credibly if we assume that Callimachus was an elderly man long accustomed to be regarded as an infallible authority.

It would appear that the three poets, Theocritus, Callimachus and Apollonius were jointly responsible for the birth of the Alexandrian epyllion. It is true that Apollonius devoted himself to grand epic, but it was his challenge to Callimachus and his consequent defeat, which resulted in the acceptance of the *Hecale* as the model of the Alexandrian epic school. In the absence of chronological evidence it is impossible to determine the exact parts played by Theocritus and Callimachus in originating the epyllion form. All that can be established with any certainty is that Theocritus

¹ Susemihl, pp. 361 ff.

² Susemihl does not accept the statements on the librarianship of Apollonius, but holds that he remained in Rhodes until his death. Suidas, however, states positively that he was librarian. Cf. Mr. R. C. Seaton's Introduction to *Apollonius Rhodius*, pp. vi-vii. Loeb Classical Library.

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was somewhat older than Callimachus, and that Apollonius was considerably younger; and that, while there is good evidence for the quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius, there is no proof that Theocritus took any part in it.

IV

The dispute between the supporters of the long and the short epic clearly did not begin with the challenge of Apollonius. The rival merits of the two types must have been a regular subject of discussion in literary circles during the whole Alexandrian period. Nor was Apollonius the only writer of grand epic. The *Messenica* of Rhianus seems to have been a poem of some merit, and there were, no doubt, others who attempted long epics. There is, however, no indication that Rhianus or any other epic poets were involved in the great quarrel; either they were too obscure to attract the notice of the critics, or they were not sufficiently aggressive to provoke hostility.

It is easy to imagine the circumstances which led to the outbreak of the quarrel.¹ Callimachus was growing old and had for years been regarded as an oracle in literary circles. He had, no doubt, emphatically denounced the practice of attempting to follow Homer. He had certainly demonstrated his attachment to the tradition of the short epic by the publication of some of the hymns.

¹ Couat has made an elaborate reconstruction of the quarrel in his concluding chapter. His theories are interesting, but based on insufficient evidence. In particular his attempt to fasten the major part of the blame on Apollonius does not carry conviction.

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He may have already published the *Hecale* as an example of what modern epic should be, for, whether it was earlier or later than the *Argonautica*, it was certainly a manifesto. From time to time a bold opponent would put forward a plea for grand epic, and discussion would become furious; but such discussions, we may suppose, were confined to the Library and aroused no bitter feeling; the last word was with the master critic, since no one seriously wished to dispute his authority. The peace of the Library was disturbed and its oracle challenged, not by a poet of experience and reputation, who could hold his own in argument, but by a young man, still a pupil, who had the audacity to declare that he could and would write a long epic. Callimachus, feeling the dignity of his position menaced, denounced the rebel; Apollonius, conscious of his own powers, retorted with all the intolerance of youth, and the war was carried on in public by epigrams and allusions in the works of both poets. As in most literary squabbles, the blame probably lay equally with both sides; certainly there is much to be said on both sides. The immediate victory fell to Callimachus; Apollonius recited part of the *Argonautica* in public, and was greeted with so much derision that he retired discredited to Rhodes. But he had his triumph many years later, when the poem had been revised and completed, and, as librarian, he succeeded to the honours of Callimachus. If the tradition is true, he was buried at the side of his old enemy.

After the defeat of Apollonius the position of Callimachus was secure. Apollonius cannot have lacked supporters, but they had lost their leader, and Calli-

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machus was not afraid of their taunts. In a newly-discovered passage of the *Aitia*¹ he has much to say of the spiteful persons who maintain that he cannot write a long poem. It is to him, he declares, and not to them, that Apollo has given counsel. But his real answer to his detractors was the *Hecale*, and this poem is the first true narrative epyllion. It was greeted as a model, and served to define the accepted form for future generations.

It will be well before considering the history of the epyllion to indicate the general characteristics of this form. An epyllion is a short narrative poem. The length may and does vary considerably, but an epyllion seems never to have exceeded the length of a single book, and probably the average length was four to five hundred lines. The subject is sometimes merely an incident in the life of an epic hero or heroine, sometimes a complete story, the tendency of the author being to use little-known stories or possibly even to invent new ones. The later Alexandrians and the Romans preferred love stories and usually concentrated the interest on the heroine. The style varies; it may be entirely narrative, or may be decorated with descriptive passages of a realistic character. The dramatic form is frequently employed, and it is usual to find at least one long speech. So far the only distinction between the epyllion and the narrative hymn consists in the subject. A hymn always tells the story of a god, whereas an epyllion

¹ *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part xvii. Egypt Exploration Society. London. 1927. The date of the *Aitia* is unknown, but these lines may well have belonged to the period of the quarrel; their sentiment is exactly that of the closing lines of the *Hymn to Apollo*, but the language is more direct and the passage is longer.

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deals with human beings; gods may appear as characters, but there is no emphasis on their divinity. There is, however, one characteristic of the epyllion which sharply distinguishes it from other types, namely the digression.

Except the *Hylas* of Theocritus, all the extant epyllia before the time of Ovid¹ possess digressions. The digression is a second story, often of great length, contained within the first, and frequently quite unconnected with it in subject. Usually it appears as a story told by one of the characters; less commonly as a description of a work of art. Judging from the extant examples, it seems to have been the practice to secure an artistic connection between the two parts of the poem by using parallel subjects and contrasting the details; or two definitely contrasting subjects might be chosen; in many cases there is also a contrast of style. It is uncertain who was responsible for this curious form. It does, however, bear the marks of its descent from early epic. The Homeric hymns had established the tradition of the short story, and of the lighter and more romantic treatment. The Hesiodic epic abounded in short episodes, and, moreover, was full of subjects which had never been artistically developed. It is perhaps to the prominence of women in the Hesiodic catalogues that the Alexandrians and their successors owed the tendency to concentrate the interest on the heroine. The digression is probably an inheritance from both Homer and Hesiod. The Shield of Achilles and the

¹ Ovid, whose *Metamorphoses* are based on epyllion form, sometimes uses the digression, sometimes omits it. For obvious reasons the form had to undergo considerable modification in a collection of stories.

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narrative of Odysseus are obvious Homeric examples; an even more striking one is the Lay of Demodocus, which has no connection with Odysseus. But in Homer the important digressions are an integral part of the whole story, while any irrelevant matter is kept strictly subordinate to the main interest. In the epyllion the digression is often as important as the main subject, and sometimes even becomes the more important of the two, the main subject acting as a framework. Here we find the Hesiodic tradition at work, for the genealogical catalogue had to depend for its interest on its narrative digression.

The general style of the epyllion is that of all Alexandrian poetry, formal, allusive, learned. The language and atmosphere are more homely than those of grand epic, and a graceful use of realism gives great charm to the work of some poets. The epyllion at its best makes very pleasant reading, and, in Vergil's hands, even loses its artificiality; at its worst, it must have been intolerable, but the worst examples have not come down to us.

II THE GREEK AND LATIN EPYLLIA

I

THE Greek epyllion is an outcome of the tradition which took its rise in the Homeric hymns and the short narrative episodes which varied the monotony of the Hesiodic catalogues. It is proved, not only by extant examples, but also by records and fragments of lost poems that the majority of the Alexandrian epic poets deliberately avoided grand epic, and adopted either the hymn or the catalogue form. The epyllion was an easy and natural development of this tradition. But its actual genesis in the Alexandrian age is very obscure. It has been shown that the lives of the poets can only be approximately dated, and it is impossible to discover with any certainty the dates of individual poems. The earliest extant examples of epyllion are the epic idylls of Theocritus; and the lost *Hecale* of Callimachus belongs to the same period. But before considering the position of these poems, it is necessary to discuss the question whether they were preceded by any poem which might conceivably be called an epyllion.

The only poet, who must be considered, is Philetas of Cos, since he is the only Alexandrian poet older than Theocritus, who certainly wrote a hexameter poem of a narrative or partially narrative character.¹ From various

¹ Hermesianax does not seem to have written anything except elegy.

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references in Propertius¹ we know that he was regarded primarily as a writer of elegy, and most of his fragments are in elegiac metre. But he is known to have produced one hexameter poem, the *Hermes*, and it has been suggested that this was an epyllion.²

Only four fragments of the *Hermes* have survived, and the longest consists of three lines. This at least establishes the metre, and another fragment,

ἀτραπὸν εἰς Ἀίδαο
ἦνυσσα, τὴν οὐπω τις ἐναντίον ἦλθεν ὁδίτης³

shows that someone is speaking. Otherwise the fragments are inconclusive. Parthenius, however, gives us some evidence of subject, since he quotes the *Hermes* as the source of the story of Polymela.⁴

If the *Hermes* was an epyllion, then Philetas must be recognised as the father of the epyllion, and it must be assumed that the Greek writers of epyllia adopted the form from him. It is not impossible that this theory is correct, but there are several serious objections to it. We have to suppose an epyllion presumably dealing with some story of Hermes, and also containing the Polymela incident, which is a story of Odysseus, and has no apparent connection of any kind with Hermes. There are, of course, several instances in extant epyllia of a combination of unrelated subjects, and, if we base our arguments on any known parallel, we must sup-

¹ Prop. ii. 34, 31; iii. 1, 1; iii. 3, 52; iii. 9, 44; iv. 6, 3.

² Susemihl, p. 177. Meineke discusses the *Hermes* and proves that it was an epic poem, but advances no theory on its character. *Anal. Alex.*, pp. 348-351.

³ Phil. fr. 6. *Collectanea Alexandrina*. J. U. Powell. Oxford. 1925.

⁴ Parth., *Erot. Path.*, ii.

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pose that Philetas produced a formal epyllion of the narrative type containing as a main subject some exploit of Hermes with the Polymela story as a digression. This is the form ultimately adopted by later poets, but no epyllion of this type occurs among the works of Theocritus. Of the epyllia ascribed to him only one, *Heracles the Lion-slayer*, has a fully-developed formal digression, and its subject is closely related to the main subject. We must then suppose that Theocritus borrowed the form from Philetas, and immediately modified it to such an extent that he may be said to have evolved a completely different type.

There is no inherent impossibility in this theory, but there are several serious objections to it. The earliest known epyllion, in which the subject of the digression is unrelated to the main subject, is the *Hecale* of Callimachus. Now the *Hecale* was clearly regarded as a new departure in epic poetry; yet it could hardly have been so regarded if it was merely a type borrowed from Philetas. Again, the Polymela incident is a love-story of a type that was extremely popular among the Latin imitators of the Alexandrians; Parthenius in fact intended it for the use of Cornelius Gallus. Such stories do not occur in any known Greek epyllion writer earlier than Euphoriion. Indeed, in Theocritus and Callimachus love-stories scarcely occur at all as epyllion subjects. The only extant instance is the *Hylas* of Theocritus, and here the love interest is entirely subordinate. It may also be noted that the Latin poets never refer to Philetas as their master in epic; he is to them an elegist. If he were indeed the father of epyllion it is curious to find no reference to the fact. Finally, the title does not

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suggest an epyllion. Among the epyllia of which we have any knowledge not one has the name of a god as its title; they all take their titles from heroes or heroines. The poems which bear the names of gods are hymns. The title "Hermes," if it is that of a narrative poem at all, suggests a hymn rather than an epyllion.

Any one of these objections taken alone is valueless; but in conjunction, they suggest that the *Hermes* was not a new type of poem, but belonged to a type already existing. It was probably narrative, and, if so, may have been a catalogue poem¹ or a hymn. The Polymela incident perhaps argues a catalogue poem as the more likely; incidents in hymns probably always had some definite connection with the god to whom the hymn was addressed.

It is probable, therefore, that the epyllion did not originate with Philetas. But, even if he or some unknown poet produced works of the epyllion type, they must have had little influence. It was Theocritus and Callimachus who fixed and popularised the form. We must therefore find in the works of these two poets the various elements which contributed to the development of the epyllion, as well as the earliest examples of the form itself.

The poems of Theocritus are all included under the single title of "Idylls." The term is completely justified for every poem in the collection is an exquisitely finished picture. The subjects are widely varied, but the style throughout is the same. Whether the scene is laid in the country or the city, in the life of the day or

¹ Couat holds that it was a collection of stories. *Poésie alexandrine*. C. III., pp. 70-71.

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the heroic age, it is described with realistic detail. In the epic idylls the realistic treatment is brought into relation with a romantic background, and this mixture of realism and romance has important results in the development of epyllion style.

In classifying the idylls of Theocritus according to subject it is not always possible to place a poem definitely in one class or another. The fact that an idyll deals with an epic subject does not necessarily make it an epic idyll. The *Cyclops*¹ and the *Epithalamium of Helen*² both touch upon epic subjects, but can hardly be considered epic poems. There are, however, five poems, which are definitely narrative in character: *Hylas*, the *Dioscuri*, the *Infant Heracles*, *Heracles the Lion-slayer* and *Dionysus*.³

Two of these poems, the *Dioscuri* and the *Dionysus*, are hymns. The distinction between the hymn and the epyllion has already been pointed out, but it is necessary to discuss the point in more detail here, since a hymn, which is principally narrative, in many respects resembles an epyllion. The distinction, however, is not, as might at first appear, purely arbitrary; a very slight examination proves that it is essential.

We still possess eight Alexandrian hymns. In addition to the two already mentioned there are six by Callimachus, addressed to Zeus, Apollo, Artemis, Delos, Pallas⁴ and Demeter. These are all clearly marked examples of a single type, and from a consideration of

¹ Theoc., xi.

² Theoc., xviii.

³ Theoc., xiii; xxii; xxiv; xxv; xxvi.

⁴ The *Hymn to Pallas*, generally known as the *Bath of Pallas*, is an elegiac poem, but does not differ from the others except in metre.

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their characteristics it is possible to form a conception of this type and to observe how it differs from other epic types.

A hymn has for its subject a god or deified hero. Some part of it consists in prayers and praises addressed to the god, who is constantly invoked in the second person.¹ There is usually a narrative passage, which may vary considerably in length; in the *Hymn to Apollo* it is absent altogether and in the *Hymn to Zeus* it is short; in the others it occupies a considerable part of the poem. This narrative may be an incident or series of incidents in the life of the god, or it may be a story with a human being as the central figure, introduced to illustrate the power of the god; the hymns to Pallas and Demeter are of this latter type.

The Alexandrian hymn is in fact modelled on the Homeric hymn, the principal difference in form being that the narrative is less prominent in the Alexandrian hymn. Theocritus comes nearer to the Homeric type than Callimachus does, for Callimachus is always an ætiologist, and the hymns give him many opportunities of discussing his favourite problems. But both poets are reproducing an old form in the style of their own time.

It will thus be seen that an Alexandrian hymn, even if it contains a narrative, is not primarily a narrative poem. It is an invocation accompanied by narrative. It thus differs essentially from an epyllion, in which the story,

¹ The only exception is Theocritus' *Hymn to Dionysus*, where the invocation in the second person is not used. But the concluding lines are equivalent to an invocation. Theocritus only once uses the second person for invocation in the epic idylls.

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however it is treated, is of primary importance. The hymns, however, have had their part in influencing epyllion style, since they are marked by the realistic treatment of the old legends, which has already been noted as characteristic of the epic idylls of Theocritus. The use of realism leads to a lightening of epic style and a more homely treatment of the subject. This is particularly noticeable in the Latin poets, who freely admit diminutives in epyllion, though they avoid them in grand epic. From the hymn also the later Greek and the Latin epyllion writers inherited the practice of invoking their characters in the second person.

The three poems attributed to Theocritus, which may be termed epyllia, are the *Hylas*, the *Infant Heracles* and *Heracles the Lion-slayer*. The first two are certainly his; the third has been ascribed by some authorities to an unknown poet of his school.¹ Each poem deals with an incident in the life of Heracles, and each is presented in a definitely narrative form. Though allusion is made to the divinity of Heracles, he is not conceived as a god, but is treated as a mortal hero.² The *Hylas* is the shortest and simplest of the three; it has one subject only and there is no digression. The *Infant Heracles* is

¹ Cf. Susemihl, pp. 215 ff. Couat maintains its authenticity. Cf. *La Poésie alexandrine*, pp. 402 ff. Croiset also attributes it to Theocritus.

² A recently discovered papyrus establishes the fact that about thirty lines are missing at the end of the *Infant Heracles*. The text is too much mutilated for any conjecture on the sense of the passage, but there appears to be a reference at the end to the apotheosis of Heracles, and a marginal note on the last two lines shows that the poet addressed Heracles as a god. This is the only instance of invocation in the three poems. Apart from these lines the *Infant Heracles* has none of the characteristics of a hymn. Cf. *Two Theocritus Papyri*. Arthur S. Hunt & John Johnson. Egypt Exploration Society. London. 1930.

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longer and falls into three parts, the incident of the serpents, the prophecy of Teiresias and the account of the education of Heracles. It is thus somewhat more elaborate than the *Hylas*, and in the prophecy of Teiresias we may see the rudiments of a digression. *Heracles the Lion-slayer* is the longest and most complex, and contains a formal digression. This is introduced by means of a question asked by one of the characters; Heracles replies by telling the story of the Nemean Lion. These three poems are definitely epyllia in so far as they are short stories on epic subjects. They are clearly distinguished from hymns both in subject and treatment; the story is an end in itself and not an illustration. This is true even of the *Hylas*, where the story is used ostensibly as an illustration of the statement that no one is exempt from the power of love. But, in the Theocritean epyllion, the story is conceived as a series of pictures; there is no complexity of construction and no study of character. The reader moves from one picture to another, sometimes assisted by brief narrative passages, sometimes assuming the advance in the action from the details of the picture. Poems of this type are more properly termed epic idylls, and must be carefully distinguished from those epyllia in which the treatment is definitely narrative. The epic idyll tended to disappear, as the narrative epyllion developed, but Theocritus found successors in Moschus and Bion and probably in other writers whose works have not survived.

The first formal narrative epyllion appears to have been the *Hecale* of Callimachus. It survives only in fragments, but we have enough of it to show clearly that,

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while it contained many picturesque passages in the idyllic style, the interest centred on plot and character. Hecale was the old woman who entertained Theseus on his way to the fight with the bull of Marathon. The poem related his visit, the fight with the bull, the triumphant return of Theseus and his meeting with the funeral procession of Hecale, who had died during his absence.

The discovery of the Rainer fragments of the *Hecale* and their publication in 1893 by Gomperz¹ made it possible to arrive at some definite facts about the construction of the poem. These fragments will be discussed in detail at a later point. Historically they are of great importance, since they prove the existence of a digression on the story of Erichthonius. This digression consisted of at least eighty lines, and, as far as we can judge, had no connection with the story of Hecale. The occurrence of a formal digression in *Heracles the Lion-slayer* has already been noted, but in that poem both the main subject and the digression deal with Heracles. The *Hecale* seems to be the first instance of an epyllion in which the two subjects are unconnected. The great importance of the *Hecale* consists in the fact that it appears to have been regarded as a manifesto of the short epic school. This tradition is preserved by the scholiast on the *Hymn to Apollo*,² who states that

¹ Theodor Gomperz. *Aus der Hekale des Kallimachos. Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer*. Vienna. 1893. Reprinted in *Hellenika*. Vol. II., pp. 273 ff. Leipzig. 1912.

² Call., *Hymn* ii., 105-106. See p. 74 below. Wilamowitz (*Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos*, Berlin. 1924. Vol. II., p. 87.) dismisses the statement, but his arguments are not sufficiently strong to warrant the discarding of a definite tradition.

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Callimachus wrote the *Hecale* because his enemies said that he could not write a long poem. There is no reason to regard this statement as untrustworthy. Callimachus undoubtedly disliked the grand epic of his day, and spoke and wrote against it; any poem of his would inevitably be regarded as a manifesto, and we may fairly see in the *Hecale* his answer to Apollonius: "If you want epic, this is the way to write it."¹

We have then in the epic idylls of Theocritus and the *Hecale* of Callimachus the starting-point of the epyllion. Theocritus takes an epic subject and draws a series of pictures illustrating it, keeping the narrative subordinate to the description. Callimachus presents a narrative poem with occasional pictures, keeping the description subordinate to the plot and characters.

Since it is impossible to determine the dates of individual poems, the exact relation between the works of Theocritus and Callimachus can only be a matter for very cautious conjecture. The most reasonable theory on the chronology of the *Idylls* is that of P. E. Legrand;² unfortunately he has found no evidence for dating any of the epic idylls except the *Hylas*, which, from its dedication to Nicias, who was apparently then unmarried, he assigns to the period when Theocritus was a member of the circle of Philetas in Cos. If this dating is correct the *Hylas* is an early poem, and in no way influenced by Callimachus. Two points of internal evidence support this view: the tone of the poem sug-

¹ The term "long poem" is relative. See p. 74 below.

² *Etude sur Théocrite*. C. II. Bibliothèque des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome. Fasc. 79. Paris. 1898. See also the Introduction to R. J. Cholmeley's *Idylls of Theocritus*. G. Bell and Sons. 1919.

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gests that both the author and the person addressed are young and on intimate terms of friendship; and further the *Hylas* is the simplest of the epic idylls, containing one incident only, and therefore less developed in form than the others.¹ Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that it is the first of the extant epyllia, and possibly the first epyllion produced by any poet.

For the other epic idylls there is no evidence except what can be supplied by a consideration of their style and construction. On the whole it seems likely that the *Infant Heracles* belongs to the period when Theocritus was in Alexandria. It bears traces of the interest in ætiology and religious rites, which is characteristic of the Alexandrian school. The account of the education of Heracles with the names of his tutors suggests the Alexandrian love for the less-known details of a legend. These characteristics do not appear to any great extent in the work of Theocritus as a whole, and it seems likely that a poem in which they play a prominent part will belong to the period subsequent to 273 B.C., when he was in Alexandria and in contact with the principal members of the school. It has already been noted that in this poem we may find the first traces

¹ Susemihl considers that the *Hylas* may have resulted from the quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius, and places it after 265 B.C. Wilamowitz also takes this view. (Cf. His note on the poem in the Oxford Text, p. 161). There is no definite evidence for this theory. It is more likely that the poem was written when Theocritus was closely associated with Nicias. Moreover, if the *Hylas* had any connection with the quarrel, we should expect it, at least, to show such marks of the influence of Callimachus as, for instance, allusions to other stories and ætiological details. Legrand can find no evidence that Theocritus took part in the quarrel. (Cf. *Étude sur Théocrite*, pp. 73-77).

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of a digression; this fact suggests that it is earlier than the *Hecale*, in which the formal digression is fully developed.

Heracles the Lion-slayer presents a different problem. It is variously attributed to Theocritus and to some unknown pastoral poet. If it could be definitely asserted that it is not by Theocritus, its place would be clear. We might then regard it as the work of a poet, who imitated Theocritus with some success, adopting characteristics both from the pastoral and the epic poems; it would thus be later than the *Infant Heracles*, and probably also than the *Hecale*, since it is a formal epyllion and contains a digression. On this assumption the author was applying the constructive methods of Callimachus to the pastoral style. But if the poem is by Theocritus, the problem becomes not only more difficult, but more important, for, if it is earlier than the *Hecale*, Theocritus was the inventor of the digression. It has been shown that the most probable date for the quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius is 247 B.C. The *Hecale* may have been published before the quarrel, but it is more probable that it was produced as an answer to Apollonius either in 247 B.C. or shortly afterwards. Callimachus introduced a formal digression into this poem, and, by so doing, formulated a rule for his followers. But there is not the slightest evidence to show whether he was himself imitating Theocritus. It is unlikely that each of the two poets evolved the formal digression independently, and we may therefore assume that one of them borrowed the device from the other. We do not know whether Theocritus was still alive in 247 B.C., but the absence of any evidence that he was

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living is no proof of his death; it is quite possible that he read the *Hecale*, and imitated its construction in an epic idyll. On the other hand, it is equally possible that Callimachus adopted a combination of two subjects from Theocritus. Some support may be found for the latter view in the fact that the digression in the *Hecale* was inserted into the middle of the poem and not tacked on at the end, and that it was better proportioned in length to the rest of the epyllion than was the digression in *Heracles the Lion-slayer*. These points might argue a more advanced stage of development; but on the other hand it may be maintained that Theocritus was less skilful than Callimachus in epic construction, and was not entirely successful in his imitation.

Here the question must rest, unless further chronological evidence is discovered. Either Theocritus or Callimachus was first responsible for the general outlines of epyllion form. Theocritus is certainly the father of the idyllic and Callimachus of the narrative type; and since epyllion writers regarded Callimachus as their model, and tended more and more to turn to the narrative type, it may be said that historically Callimachus is the more important of the two poets.

In studying the epyllia of these two poets it will be convenient to follow the order already indicated. Since the epic idyll appears to be the earlier form, it will be treated first, and, since the chronological order is uncertain, the poems of Theocritus will be studied in the order of their complexity. With these will be grouped the epyllia of Moschus and Bion, since these poets, although considerably later in date, followed the Theocritean tradition without serious modification. The

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Hecale, whatever its actual date, represents a further development, and may therefore be regarded as a later stage in the history of the form.

The next writer of epyllia, of whom we have any knowledge, is Euphorion of Chalcis. The date of his birth according to Suidas was 276 B.C. His work is represented only by very short fragments, but, from various notices of him, it is clear that his influence was important. He seems with Parthenius of Nicæa to have formed a link between Greek and Latin epyllion.

Parthenius was a Greek resident in Rome at the time when Vergil was beginning to write; indeed he is said to have been Vergil's tutor, and he was certainly a friend of Cornelius Gallus and associated with his circle. He is not known to have written any epyllion himself, but he is historically very important, owing to the fact that he made a prose collection of stories suitable for elegy and epyllion. These stories, dedicated to Cornelius Gallus and known as the *Love Romances*, are mainly drawn from Alexandrian sources, and include several citations from Euphorion. They represent the type of subject preferred by the later Alexandrians and largely adopted by the Romans. This type will be studied in detail at a later point; it will be sufficient here to note that, in the later epyllion, the picturesque elements tend to become still more subordinate to the narrative or to disappear completely; that the combination of main subject and digression is regularly introduced; that the subject is usually a love romance; and that there is a tendency to prefer the morbidly sensational type of story.

It seems likely that it was Euphorion who departed

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from the practice of including a picturesque element in the epyllion. Callimachus had already in the *Hecale* given primary importance to the plot. The *Love Romances* of Parthenius, although they are admittedly only very brief summaries, suggest a narrative rather than a picturesque treatment, and the *Ciris*, which certainly belongs to the school of Gallus, if it is not by Gallus himself, seems to be a typical epyllion of the school of poets whom Cicero calls "*Cantores Euphorionis*." Certainly between the *Hecale* and the *Ciris* important changes have been introduced into the epyllion, and it seems extremely likely that Euphorion was responsible for the new type. At any rate we have no knowledge of any other poet who can have filled the gap between Callimachus and Parthenius.

The type of epyllion which Euphorion probably introduced will be more appropriately discussed in connection with the Latin epyllion, since no Greek example survives. The evidence for Euphorion's position is of course inconclusive and must remain so, unless more of his work is discovered. It may be summed up as follows. Between the *Hecale* of Callimachus and the *Love Romances* of Parthenius the epyllion has passed through a change. A clearly defined type has arisen and is reproduced by the Latin poets, and this type differs very considerably in spirit, though not in form, from what we know of the *Hecale*. The one name of note which occurs in this gap in the history of the epyllion is that of Euphorion, who is known to have been imitated by the Latin poets. It is, then, not unlikely that Euphorion developed the new type, leaving the *Hecale* as the sole representative of its kind.

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Greek epyllion has thus been found to have three stages. The earliest form is the epic idyll of the Theocritean type, in which the narrative exists mainly for the sake of the picture. The second stage is found in the *Hecale*, which has a definite, though simple plot: the picturesque method is still used, but the picture is not the most important feature. A third stage may be represented by the work of Euphoriion. Of this stage we have no extant example in Greek, but we can reconstruct it from the *Love Romances* of Parthenius, from the *Ciris* and from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This type differs from the epic idyll by the introduction of a definite and perhaps a complicated plot, and from the *Hecale* by a departure from the realistic descriptions of persons and scenes, which Callimachus had inherited from the epic idyll. It is characterised by the increasing prominence of the love romance, by the sensational description of deeds and scenes of horror and by the study of morbid psychology.

II

The history of the Latin epyllion may be divided into three periods, each marked by certain definite characteristics : the period of Catullus and his school; the early years of Vergil and Cornelius Gallus; and the period of the great Augustans. The division is in some respects an arbitrary one, for no hard and fast chronological line can be drawn between the various types represented, but there is some convenience in adopting it, as we possess three distinct types of epyllion representing the three periods.

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The chronology of the Latin epyllion causes some difficulty as very few of the works concerned can be accurately dated. Each of them, however, can be certainly dated within a few years either by references in contemporary authors or by considerations of style and metre.

Cicero has two very important references to the poets of his day. The first is in a letter to Atticus written on November 26th, B.C. 50 :—

“Flavit ab Epiro lenissimus Onchesmites.

Hunc σπονδείζοντα si cui voles τῶν νεωτέρων pro tuo vendito.”¹

The other is the well-known remark in the *Tusculan Disputations*, where, in speaking of Ennius, he says: “O poetam egregium, quamquam ab his cantoribus Euphorionis contemnitur.”² But these references are tantalising, as they do not show definitely what particular poets Cicero had in mind. This is a very important point and the probabilities must be carefully considered.

It is clear that in both passages Cicero was thinking particularly of epic poets. His spondaic line can be closely paralleled in Catullus,³ and might be included in any narrative poem of his school. In speaking of the *Cantores Euphorionis* he says that they despise Ennius; now Ennius was the greatest of the early writers of Latin epic, and we have reason to believe that much, if not all of Euphorion's work, with the exception of occasional epigrams, was epic; it may then be taken as

¹ Att. vii., 2, 1.

² Cic., *Tuscul.*, iii., 19. Cicero himself wrote at least one epyllion, the *Alcyone*; it seems to have been a work of his youth, and probably he no longer regarded it seriously.

³ Cf. “Tene Thetis tenuit pulcherrima Nereine ?” Cat., lxiv., 29.

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fairly obvious that by *Cantores Euphorionis* Cicero meant certain epic poets.

In the letter written in 50 B.C. there seems to be no doubt that Cicero, in speaking of the *Neoteroi*, was referring to the school of Catullus. It is true that Catullus himself was dead by that time, but Calvus, Cinna and Cornificius, the other epic poets of that school, were all alive, and were still the most prominent of living poets. But in 44 B.C., when Cicero wrote the *Tusculan Disputations*, the position was different. Calvus, who, after Catullus, was the chief representative of the school, was dead, and it is probable that Cinna was also dead; in any case his epyllion, the *Zmyrna*, was written while Catullus was still alive.¹ But Cicero, in writing "*his cantoribus*," suggests living poets: he may also have included all the late writers of the modern school, but he evidently regarded the school as still continuing.

Cornificius was, in 44 B.C., the only surviving member of the circle who is known to have written epyllion. But it is probable that, by that date, a new circle of poets was forming, and must have published some early work, namely the circle of Vergil and Gallus; with these poets Parthenius should probably be closely associated.

It may be considered fairly certain that Vergil had produced something as early as 44 B.C. Internal evidence shows that the *Eclogues* cover a period from 43 B.C. to 37 B.C., and the *Eclogues*, though immature when compared with Vergil's later work, show in technique a striking advance on earlier hexameter poems, and sug-

¹ Cat., xciv., 1-2.

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gest that the writer was already experienced. Moreover, it is known that the *Culex* was earlier than the *Eclogues*. If the *Culex* which we possess is Vergil's poem of that name (and it is not improbable that it is so), Vergil was writing epyllion before 48 B.C.; for Octavius is addressed as *puer*, which would not be appropriate after his assumption of the *toga virilis* in that year. Gallus also must have been known as a poet before Cicero's death. In the tenth Eclogue he is a poet of well-established reputation, and is turning from epic poetry to elegies. The lines are very significant :

"Ibo et Chalcidico quæ sunt mea condita versu
Carmina pastoris Siculi moderabor avena."¹

There is a direct reference here to poems written in imitation of Euphorion; they probably included both translations and imitations, for Servius remarks on the passage that Gallus had translated Euphorion. In the sixth Eclogue again Gallus is associated by implication with Euphorion, for he is to tell the story of the Grynean grove—a subject which, as we know from Servius, had been treated by Euphorion.² Gallus, then, is literally a *Cantor Euphorionis*, and, as in 37 B.C., the probable date of the tenth Eclogue, he was a well-known poet and had published both epic and elegiac verse, it is a reasonable conjecture that some of his epic verse had appeared before 44 B.C. Whether Vergil wrote in imitation of Euphorion at this date we do not know; the *Culex* does not belong to Euphorion's type; but he knew the works of Euphorion well and used

¹ Verg., *Ecl.*, x., 50-51.

² Serv. *ad Verg.*, *Ecl.*, vi., 72.

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them later in the *Æneid*; Parthenius was also familiar with them. Thus there is good reason for classing these three poets at this date as *Cantores Euphorionis*, while there is no extant evidence for direct imitation of Euphorion on the part of Catullus and his school. The typical epyllion of this second group is the *Ciris*. It is unfortunate that there is no indication of actual date in this poem, but from its type and metre it is practically certain that it belongs to the early years of Vergil. It matters very little at this stage of the enquiry who the author was. If he was neither Vergil nor Gallus, he was some unknown poet of their circle. The style is too much like that of Vergil's earlier work to have been produced by anyone who was not in close association with him. We may then regard the *Ciris* as the type of epic to which Cicero preferred the *Annales* of Ennius.

We have knowledge of only four epyllia produced by the Neoteric group, and of these only one has survived, the *Peleus and Thetis* of Catullus. This poem is entirely devoid of any Roman or Italian element, and is so completely Alexandrian in conception and treatment, that it has even been regarded as a translation. Its interest consists mainly in the series of graceful pictures which it provides; it can hardly be said to have a plot at all. Thus it is much nearer to the epic idyll as represented by the *Europa* of Moschus. It has no affinity with the epyllion of Callimachus or Euphorion.

Catullus, however, is at all times too great a poet to be regarded as typical of his school. The purity of taste, which made him turn to the early Greek lyrics for inspiration, no doubt led him in epyllion to look to

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Theocritus and Moschus rather than to the narrative epyllion writers. It is not safe to argue that his friends would always have admired what he admired. We are therefore reduced to conjecture with regard to the other three epyllia, the *Io* of Calvus, the *Zmyrna* of Cinna and the *Glaucus* of Cornificius.

These three subjects have all been used by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, all being treated at some length, and it is most probable that in each case Ovid reflects to a certain extent the work of the earlier poet; we find that this is regularly his custom where a story can be compared with an earlier presentation of it; the story is the same in outline and general treatment, but details are altered; usually the incidents most fully described in the earlier work are slightly treated, while new incidents are developed, perhaps from a hint in the older version. This practice is one of the most interesting characteristics of Ovid's narrative, and will be more fully illustrated at a later point. For the present we may assume that Ovid's treatment of these three stories may throw some light on the epyllia under consideration.¹

Ovid's *Io*² suggests an epyllion of the idyllic type. He does not make a pure idyll of it, for, as always, his interest lies in the story. But there is no dramatic feeling and no attempt at psychological study. It is full of pastoral pictures and has a strong comic element which suggests that it may be partially a parody of its original. If it is a new version of Calvus' story, the original would seem to have been of the idyllic character. The

¹ Even from the very scanty fragments of the *Io* it is clear that Ovid owed something to Calvus. See pp. 134 ff.

² Ov., *Met.*, i., 583-747.

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*Glaucus*¹ bears all the marks of a folk-tale, and it is in a pastoral setting, which again suggests idyll rather than epyllion.

The *Zmyrna* on the other hand presents a story, which is markedly of the type preferred by Parthenius; and Ovid in his version² gives us a typical epyllion of the *Ciris* class. It is possible of course that Cinna treated it as an idyll, but, in view of the subject, it is not likely. Moreover, the poem was famous for its learning and obscurity, a fact which suggests that Cinna followed Euphorion rather than Theocritus. Thus he may perhaps be regarded as being in spirit one of the *Cantores Euphorionis*, although he belonged to an earlier circle of poets.

On the whole it is probable that this group found its models mainly in Theocritus and other idyllic writers. Whether Callimachus influenced them at all is a question which it is impossible to decide. No trace of him appears in the *Peleus and Thetis*, and the other subjects do not suggest any likeness to the *Hecale*. The *Zmyrna* is the only epyllion of this period which in subject definitely belongs to the type popularised by Euphorion and Parthenius.

Thus Parthenius, though he forms a link between the Greek and Latin epyllion writers, belongs rather to the second group—the circle of Vergil and Gallus. The importance of the *Ciris* as typical of this group has already been noted. The *Culex*, on the other hand, though it is probably Vergil's, is nearer to the earlier type. As it appears to have been written before 48 B.C.,

¹ Ov., *Met.*, xiii., 917–965.

² Ov., *Met.*, x., 298–502. Ovid, however, has no digression.

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it may belong to the period preceding Vergil's association as a poet with Gallus.

In addition to the *Ciris* there is the list of epyllion subjects in the sixth Eclogue. It is very probable that these are really subjects treated by Gallus, but in any case they are instructive, as they show the subjects considered suitable at this period. It may be observed that they include three tragic love stories of the type preferred by Parthenius.

To the latest period of the Latin epyllion belong Vergil's *Aristaeus* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is really a collection of epyllia. Both Vergil and Ovid reveal new possibilities for the epyllion; Vergil by uniting in a single poem all the elements of beauty from all the earlier types, and abandoning the studied artificiality of the earlier writers; Ovid by adopting the old catalogue form and including in it every type of story, yet treating each story as individual and complete in itself.

The *Metamorphoses* are of great importance in the study of the epyllion, as Ovid has made use of all the epyllion writers and has given examples of every type except the purely idyllic. His gift of easy vivid narrative, his fertile imagination, his sense of the ridiculous, his judgment in introducing the dramatic form and above all his interest and delight in the story for its own sake give to the epyllion a new charm which the earlier writers had not discovered. His world is always a fairyland, and has no connection with real life; he has many faults, especially in taste, but he does not as a rule make the mistake of introducing discordant elements into his irrational world; thus the reader is

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carried along by the illusion and the narrative generally appears credible.

The *Aristæus* stands alone among epyllia. Written when Vergil's technical power was at its highest¹, it exemplifies to the full all his gifts. It has the form of the Alexandrian epyllion but the spirit is Vergil's own. Vergil's treatment, like Ovid's, is original, but the result is utterly different; he has combined human reality with his romance, and has thus produced an entirely original poem in the old form.

As in other fields of Latin poetry, so in the epyllion, there is no original development after the great Augustans. Indeed the epyllion seems to have died out with Ovid, while grand epic, which the *Neoteroi* had made unpopular, comes to its own again owing to the enormous popularity and influence of the *Æneid*. The epic poets of the Silver Age followed the tradition of the Vergilian epic; the successors of the epyllion writers are the European poets, who drew their inspiration from Ovid.

Two main points emerge in the consideration of the Latin epyllion as a whole. Firstly, in Latin as in Greek there are two definite types—the idyllic and the narrative, the idyllic being the earlier. Secondly, the main influence in the narrative epyllion is almost certainly Euphoriion; this is supported, not only by what we know of Euphoriion's work, but by inferences drawn from the testimony of Cicero, Vergil and Servius.

¹ There is no reason to discredit the statement of Servius that the *Aristæus* is subsequent to the death of Gallus in 26 B.C. It is borne out by the fact that the epic construction in the *Aristæus* is on a level with that of the later books of the *Æneid*, while it far excels that of the early books.

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The type of subject chosen and the general form are for the most part much the same in Latin as in Greek. Love stories, especially tragic ones, are the most frequent, and the tendency, already observed, to concentrate the interest on the heroine is marked. It is to the credit of the Latin poets that in most instances their learning is not obtruded. Much of the *Ciris*, indeed, shows this fault, and the *Zmyrna* evidently did the same; but Catullus, Vergil and Ovid usually keep their learning in the background to such an extent that it passes unnoticed by the casual reader.

The narrative epyllion as conceived by Euphorion and Parthenius and exemplified by the *Ciris* is not a very promising type. The fact that it culminated in such magnificence is due not so much to its inherent qualities, as to the genius of the two poets who brought it to its highest and final forms.

III

THE EPIC IDYLL. THEOCRITUS, MOSCHUS AND BION

I

The *Idylls* of Theocritus represent Alexandrian poetry at its most perfect; they exemplify all its merits, and are practically free from its faults. If they are realistic, the realism is graceful and delicate, with detail which is conscientiously studied but never exaggerated; if they are artificial they have imaginative charm without false sentiment or strained effect. When he studies character, he makes his characters live; when he turns to pure romance, his romance is convincing. Everywhere appears his wonderful gift of picture making, and each picture is perfectly composed, and drawn with minuteness and delicacy. He had no exalted aims, no desire to work out problems or to propound a philosophy; he wrote to please, and it is probable from the charm and spontaneity of his best poems that, in these at least, he wrote primarily to please himself.

Whether Theocritus was the originator of the idyll is uncertain. He evidently owed much to the writers of mime, but we have no certain knowledge of other predecessors to whom he may have been indebted. On the whole it seems likely that he evolved the pastoral idyll from a variety of sources, producing a new form by the exercise of his own genius. But it is with the epic

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and not with the pastoral idyll that we are concerned here.

The epic idyll, as conceived by the Greek poets, is a short poem presenting a picture or series of pictures on an epic subject. There is little or no attempt at delineation of character, the narrative serves only to link the descriptive passages together, and speeches made by the characters are introduced for variation and not for dramatic effect. The poet concentrates on the detailed presentment of his scenes. The style is simple and clear without obscurity of allusion or parade of learning.

The shortest and simplest of the epyllia of Theocritus is the *Hylas*. It is probably also the earliest in date, but, whether this is so or not, it seems to be entirely uninfluenced by the theories of Callimachus and his school. It is free from pedantry and obscurity; it has no learned digressions; it does not appear to propound or illustrate any literary theory. It can hardly be regarded as a deliberate attempt to produce a new type of epic poetry; rather its epic character seems to be due to an accidental combination of circumstances.

The *Hylas* is closely related to the eleventh Idyll, the *Cyclops in Love*. Both poems are addressed to the doctor Nicias, their ostensible purpose being to instruct him in matters concerned with love. The eleventh Idyll opens with the statement that the only medicine for love is poetry; this is illustrated by the story of how Polyphemus consoled himself by song for the scorn of Galatea. The poem has nothing in common with epic except metre and the character of Polyphemus. The song which occupies the main part of the poem is pastoral with comic touches; Polyphemus and Galatea

The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid

are only a shepherd and his love masquerading as Cyclops and nymph.

In construction the *Hylas* is identical with the *Cyclops*. Nicias is told that he is not the first or the only man to feel love; again a story is used in illustration, and forms the real subject of the poem; the treatment is idyllic and to some extent pastoral. Here, however, the resemblance between the two poems ends. The story of Hylas and Heracles is definitely an epic subject, and is given in narrative form. Thus it seems that Theocritus here produced an epyllion rather by chance than by design. Both poems have the same outline, but in one the subject lent itself to pastoral, in the other to narrative treatment. If we regard the *Hylas* as the first epic idyll, we must admit that the epic idyll came into being because Theocritus happened to illustrate his text by an epic subject. He was in good company, for Pindar had done the same in lyric poetry, and there were, no doubt, many precedents in the elegies of Philetas.

The story is of the slightest. Heracles loved Hylas and took him with the Argonauts when they sailed for Colchis. On the third night they landed and prepared their supper. Hylas went to fetch water from a spring, and was drawn down to the home of the nymphs, who saw and loved him. Heracles, therefore, sought him everywhere, and was left behind when the *Argo* sailed. The main interest does not lie in the story and there is no attempt at characterisation. The poem is a series of exquisite pictures, leading up to and surrounding the principal scene of the spring with its watching nymphs. The *Hylas* is the loveliest of the epic idylls and ranks

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among the best works of Theocritus. It would be difficult to find anything more perfect of its kind. The whole atmosphere is romantic. It was inevitable that the legend of the Argonauts with its strong romantic appeal, should be used by Alexandrian poets, and there is no need to assume that either Theocritus or Apollonius was influenced by the other's choice. The Trojan and Theban Cycles were known ground, almost history; but the voyage of the Argo dealt with the unknown, with exploration and discovery. However much the ports at which she touched were identified with actual places, they always remained outside the real world.¹ Accordingly Theocritus has given a touch of remoteness to the atmosphere; it happened a long time ago in a world peopled by nymphs and heroes; the Propontis is no charted sea; it washes the shores of Fairyland.

Within this remoteness of atmosphere, Theocritus has constructed pictures of extraordinary detail. The various descriptions are characterised by brevity and realism. The introductory narrative is varied by lines which call up familiar pastoral scenes. Evening is the time

ὅπόκ' ὀρτάλιχοι μινυροὶ ποτὶ κοῖτον ὄρῳεν,
σεισαμένας πτερὰ ματρὸς ἐπ' αἰθαλόεντι πετεύρῳ.²

Again he marks the time of the sailing of Argo :

ἄμος δ' ἀντέλλοντι Πηλεΐάδες, ἐσχατιαὶ δέ
ἄρνα νέον βόσκοντι, τετραμμένου εἴαρος ἤδη.³

¹ It may be noted that Apollonius concludes the story with the return of the heroes. The later history of Medea with its background of Greek customs and feelings will not fit in with the romantic conception of the story.

² Theoc., xiii., 12-13. ³ Theoc., xiii., 25-26.

The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid

The landing place is on the shore of Propontis

ἔνθα Κιανῶν

αὔλακας εὐρύνοντι βόες τρίβοντες ἄροτρον.¹

The heroes prepare their supper on the shore and make beds of leaves; Hylas goes out to find water for supper. Now comes the central picture:

τάχα δὲ κράναν ἐνόησεν

ἡμένῳ ἐν χώρῳ· περὶ δὲ θρύα πολλὰ πεφύκει,

κυάνεόν τε χελιδόνιον χλωρόν τ' ἀδιάντον

καὶ θάλλοντα σέλινα καὶ εἰλιτενῆς ἄγρωσις.²

So far the pictures are of everyday scenes full of familiar detail; with the nymphs we enter the sphere of pure imagination. Here Theocritus deserts the realistic method relating the incident and using detail sparingly. For the nymphs he has only one descriptive touch,

Εὐνίκα καὶ Μαλὶς ἔαρ θ' ὁρώωσα Νύχεια,³

but that one touch makes the picture live. He comes back to realism with the fall of Hylas, who is compared to a shooting star:

ὥς ὅτε πυρὸς ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἤριπεν ἀστήρ

ἀθρόος ἐν πόντῳ, ναύταις δέ τις εἶπεν ἑταίροις

“κουφότερ' ὦ παῖδες ποιείσθ' ὅπλα· πλευστικὸς οὖρος.”⁴

The final picture shows Heracles wandering in search of Hylas.

The *Infant Heracles* is both more elaborate and less successful than the *Hylas*. The first half, containing the story of the destruction of the two serpents sent by Hera, is excellent. It is less romantic in atmosphere than the *Hylas*, and the realism is more homely, but, as in

¹ Theoc., xiii., 30-31.

³ Theoc., xiii., 45.

² Theoc., xiii., 39-42.

⁴ Theoc., xiii., 50-52.

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the *Hylas*, one picture follows another, and all are full of charm. The scene is an interior so that there is no pastoral touch. The domestic atmosphere is indicated in the first lines:

Ἡρακλέα δεκάμηνον ἔοντα ποχ' ἁ Μιδεᾶτις
Ἀλκμήνα καὶ νυκτὶ νεώτερον Ἴφικλῆα,
ἀμφοτέρους λούσασα καὶ ἐμπλήσασα γάλακτος,
χαλκείαν κατέθηκεν ἐς ἀσπίδα, τὰν Πτερελάου
Ἀμφιτρύων καλὸν ὄπλον ἀπescύλευσε πεσόντος.¹

Alcmene rocks the children to sleep and sings a lullaby. The snakes crawl towards the sleeping children who are wakened by a mysterious light; the terror of Iphicles is vividly rendered:

ἦτοι ὄγ' ἐνθὺς ἄυσεν, ὅπως κατὰ θηρί' ἀνέγνω
κοίλου ὑπὲρ σάκεος καὶ ἀναιδέας εἶδεν ὀδόντας,
Ἴφικλέης, οὐλὰν δὲ ποσὶν διελάκτισε χλαῖναν,
φευγεμὲν ὀρμαίνων.²

Heracles seizes and strangles the snakes. There follows the picture of the awakening of Alcmena and Amphitryon and the confusion in the house. This passage is full of delightful touches. Alcmena wakes first and calls to her husband:

Ἀλκμήνα δ' ἐσάκουσε βοᾶς καὶ ἐπέγρετο πράτα·
“ἄνσταθ' Ἀμφιτρύων· ἐμὲ γὰρ δέος ἴσχει ὀκνηρόν·
ἄνστα, μηδὲ πόδεσσι τεοῖς ὑπὸ σάνδαλα θείης.
οὐκ αἰεὶς, παίδων ὁ νεώτερος ὅσσον αὐτεῖ;
ἦ οὐ νοεῖς, ὅτι νυκτὸς ἄωρί που, οἱ δέ τε τοῖχοι
πάντες ἀριφραδέες καθαρᾶς ἄπερ ἡριγενείας;
ἔστι τί μοι κατὰ δῶμα νεώτερον, ἔστι, φίλ' ἀνδρῶν.”³

¹ Theoc., xxiv., 1-5. ² Theoc., xxiv., 23-26. ³ Theoc., xxiv., 34-40.

The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid

He, in turn, wakes the servants:

δμῶας δὴ τότε ἄυσεν ὕπνον βαρὺν ἐκφυσῶντας.¹

Finally, when the children are found to be safe, they go back to bed:

*Ἀλκμήνα μὲν ἔπειτα ποτὶ σφέτερον βάλε κόλπον
ξηρὸν ὑπαὶ δείους ἀκράχολον Ἴφικλῆα·
Ἀμφιτρύων δὲ τὸν ἄλλον ὑπ' ἀμνειῖαν θέτο χλαῖναν
παῖδα, πάλιν δ' ἐς λέκτρον ἰὼν ἐμνάσατο κοίτου.²*

Except for the snakes and the supernatural light the incident might belong to everyday life; it is no more than the picture of a house disturbed by a frightened child. Iphicles in his terror screams and kicks off the coverlet; Alcmena urges Amphitryon not to stop to put on his shoes; Amphitryon gets up in a hurry and calls the snoring servants to wake and bring lights. Heracles, laughing and leaping, displays the dead snakes. Alcmena takes the terrified Iphicles in her arms, while Amphitryon puts Heracles back to bed, before he returns to finish his own interrupted sleep. The miraculous elements, the monstrous serpents and the physical strength of the ten months child, do not disturb the credibility of the scene; we scarcely observe that they are unusual. The light sent by Zeus is a different matter; it is the one reminder that the scene is not laid in the ordinary world; it brings it into the sphere of romance.

The second half of the poem shows Alcmena consulting Teiresias, who prophesies the destiny of Heracles and ordains suitable rites to expiate the prodigy of the

¹ Theoc., xxiv., 47.

² Theoc., xxiv., 60-63.

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serpents. The poem concludes with an account of the education of Heracles, and the names of his tutors.¹

This passage lacks interest for two reasons. In the first place it follows an exciting story, but is itself wanting in incident; such a passage needs very careful handling, if there is to be no loss of interest. In the second place there are no pictures; lacking, as it is, in vivid detail, and containing a description of magic rites and a catalogue of names, it is more like the work of Callimachus than Theocritus.

Heracles the Lion-slayer is a much longer poem. It falls into three distinct sections; the first shows Heracles on his way to visit Augeas; the second gives a description of the king's herds and the fight of Heracles with a bull; in the third Heracles himself tells how he slew the Nemean lion. The setting throughout is pastoral, and the poet's aim is clearly a series of pictures rather than a narrative.

In spite of the length of the poem the pictures are not many. The first part shows us Heracles in conversation with an old herdsman who consents to guide him to Augeas; there is a description by the herdsman of the great possessions of the king, and later a charming picture of the dogs barking at the stranger and fawning on their master:

τοὺς δὲ κύνες προσιόντας ἀπόπροθεν αἰψ' ἐνόησαν,
ἀμφότερον ὁδμῇ τε χροὸς δούπῳ τε ποδοῖν.
θεσπέσιον δ' ὑλάοντες ἐπέδραμον ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος
'Αμφιτρωνιάδῃ 'Ηρακλεί· τὸν δὲ γέροντα

¹ The last thirty lines are missing. See p. 31, note 2.

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ἀχρεῖον κλάζον τε περισσαινόν θ' ἐτέρωθεν.
τοὺς μὲν ὄγε λάεσσιν ἀπὸ χθονὸς ὅσσον ἀείρων
φευγέμεν ἅψ ὀπίσω δειδίσσετο, τρηχὺ δὲ φωνῇ
ἠπειλεῖ μάλα πᾶσιν, ἐρητύσασκε δ' ὕλαγμοῦ.¹

Most of this part, however, is occupied by conversation.

The second part is entirely descriptive; it contains only two pictures, but both are elaborate, that of the returning herds especially so. It is evening and the cattle are being brought in,

ὥσεί νέφη ὑδατόεντα,
ἄσσα τ' ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰσιν ἐλαυνόμενα προτέρωσσε
ἤε νότιοι βίῃ ἤε Θρηκὸς βορέαο·
τῶν μὲν τ' οὐτις ἀριθμὸς ἐν ἡέρι γίνετ' ἰόντων,
οὐδ' ἄνυσις· τόσα γάρ τε μετὰ προτέροισι κυλίνδει
ἱς ἀνέμου, τὰ δέ τ' ἄλλα κορύσσεται αὐτὶς ἐπ' ἄλλοις.²

The men are all at work engaged in various duties ; the master goes round with his son and his guest, overseeing the work. Every detail is fully developed, and the scene is most vividly portrayed:

ἄλλ' ὁ μὲν ἀμφὶ πόδεσσιν ἐντμήτοισιν ἱμάσι
καλοπέδιλ, ἀράρισκε παρασταδὸν ἐγγὺς ἀμέλγειν.
ἄλλος δ' αὖ νέα τέκνα φίλας ὑπὸ μητέρας ἱεῖ
πινέμεναι λιανοῖο μεμαότα πάγχυ γάλακτος,
ἄλλος ἀμόλγιον εἶχ', ἄλλος τρέφε πίονα τυρόν,
ἄλλος, ἐσῆγεν ἔσω ταύρους δίχα θηλειάων.
Αὐγείης δ' ἐπὶ πάντας ἰὼν θηεῖτο βοαύλους,
ἦντινὰ οἱ κτεάνων κομιδὴν ἐτίθεντο νομῆες.³

The second picture shows the strongest of the bulls attacking Heracles and overthrown by the hero's hands.

¹ Theoc., xxv., 68-75. ² Theoc., xxv., 89-94. ³ Theoc., xxv., 102-109.

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In the third part there are again only two pictures. The first is a very slight one. Phyleus and Heracles are walking to the city, and turn into the highroad from a narrow path; Phyleus asks Heracles if he is the slayer of the Nemean lion. Heracles in answer tells the story of his adventure with the lion, giving a vivid and detailed description of his search for the monster, his vain attempts to pierce its hide with his arrows and the final victory won by his club and the strength of his hands. The narrative here moves more swiftly, yet without any lack of detail. The climax when the lion springs is rendered wonderfully convincing by the homely simile which accompanies it:

ὥς δ' ὅταν ἀρματοπηγὸς ἀνὴρ πολέων ἵδρις ἔργων
ὄρηκας κάμπτησιν ἐρινεοῦ εὐκεάτοιο,
θάλψας ἐν πυρὶ πρῶτον, ἐπαξονίῳ κύκλα δίφρω·
τοῦ μὲν ὑπὲκ χειρῶν ἔφυγεν τανύφλοιος ἐρινός
καμπτόμενος, τηλοῦ δὲ μίῃ πῆδησε σὺν ὀρμῇ·
ὥς ἐπ' ἐμοὶ λῖς αἰνὸς ἀπόπροθεν ἀθρόος ἄλτο
μαιώων χροὸς ἄσαι.¹

The poem as a whole is better constructed than the *Infant Heracles*. It suffers somewhat from over-elaboration in the earlier scenes, but this fault is perhaps inevitable where an attempt is made to expand an epic idyll into a long poem. Nevertheless the pastoral descriptions have great beauty, and, if the reader has been at all impatient of them, he finds compensation in the real subject—the slaying of the lion; there is plenty of excitement in it, and, as it concludes the poem, there is no drop in the interest.

¹ Theoc., xxv., 247-253.

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The poem differs in style both from the *Hylas* and from the *Infant Heracles*. It is less romantic than the *Hylas*, perhaps because of its greater length; for the *Hylas* gains much of its atmosphere from the economy of its description, whereas the greater detail of *Heracles the Lion-slayer* makes the picture less remote and destroys some of the glamour of the heroic age. On the other hand there is nothing in it to suggest the influence of Callimachus. The author aimed rather at picture-making than story-telling, and had no wish to show off his learning; he was familiar with pastoral scenes, and skilful in his presentment of them; if he was not Theocritus, he was certainly a close follower of the Theocritean tradition.

These three poems form three definite stages in the early history of the epyllion. Of the *Hylas* enough has already been said to show its position and importance. Owing its genesis perhaps to a fortunate accident, it appears as a new literary form—the epic idyll; it is a little picture of a heroic subject, not treated in the heroic style, but with a mixture of intimacy and remoteness, of romance and realism. Its construction needs no further comment; it consists of a single incident without complexity of plot or study of character.

The *Infant Heracles* illustrates the tendency of the epic idyll to turn towards narrative. The central incident here is the strangling of the snakes, and Heracles is the central figure. But secondary figures are introduced, and the reader's interest is diverted to Amphytrion and Alcmena; there is also here a scrap of dialogue in Alcmena's appeal to Amphytrion, and Amphytrion's order to the slaves. These two figures have a touch of

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individuality; Alcmena is the anxious mother, waking at the first sound, devoting herself to the weaker child and later summoning Teiresias to give her counsel. Amphytrion on the other hand gives the impression of slowness and caution; he wants his sword and a light, before he will encounter an unknown danger; when he finds that all is well, he does not worry about the future, but goes to sleep again. It is a graceful miniature of a nervous mother and a phlegmatic father.

Here already we have slight but notable advances on the *Hylas*—a more complex incident, a more dramatic treatment, a suggestion of character study. The divergence of the two poems is still more marked with the introduction of Teiresias. This leads to a new incident, arising out of the first, but completely separated from it. The characters are Alcmena and Teiresias; Heracles does not appear in person, and it is as a man, not as a child, that Teiresias speaks of him. This second incident is almost entirely occupied by the speech of Teiresias, who narrates the future glory of the hero, and gives instructions for the purification of the house. The rest of the poem deals with the education of Heracles and is little more than a catalogue of his tutors.

The Teiresias incident is a very important addition, since it acts as a digression from the main subject; a further important point is that it consists almost entirely of a single speech. It has been pointed out that a digression occurs in *all* the complete extant epyllia except the *Hylas*, and digressions can be traced with certainty in the *Hecale* and in Vergil's picture of the epyllion of Cornelius Gallus; they are also found

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frequently, though not universally, in the epyllia which make up Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Most epyllia are also characterised by at least one long speech. These two characteristics, the digression and the long speech, vary considerably in character and method of introduction. Sometimes the digression is closely connected with the main subject, arising out of it, as in Theocritus; sometimes the connection is a mere chance one, as in the *Peleus and Thetis* of Catullus; sometimes the long speech is itself the digression, as in *Heracles the Lion-slayer*; sometimes it forms a part of the main subject, as in the *Europa* of Moschus, or of the digression, as in the *Peleus and Thetis*; sometimes there are several speeches, as in the *Ciris*. But both occur so persistently that it becomes necessary to regard them as essential to the formal epyllion.

In the *Infant Heracles*, both digression and speech may be accidental. Apart from the passage on the education of Heracles, Theocritus appears to have taken his subject from the first *Nemean Ode* of Pindar.¹ Not only is the subject borrowed, but Pindar's version of the story seems to have been deliberately used and expanded. Teiresias is represented by Pindar as prophesying the immortality of Heracles, and Theocritus no doubt introduced him for no other reason than because Pindar had done so.

There is, however, an important difference between the two versions of the incident. In Pindar it is merely a pendant to the main narrative. Amphitryon wishes to know the fate of his son; the answer of Teiresias is not distinctly quoted, but is summed up in a few lines and

¹ *Nem.*, i. 50-112.

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concludes the poem. It is natural that the miraculous strength of Heracles should lead to the anticipation of his great destiny and that the Ode should end on a note of triumph. Theocritus, on the other hand, whether consciously or not, has used the incident as a digression. It occupies thirty-nine lines out of a poem of one hundred and forty; it is introduced with some elaboration as a second part of the story; it gives not only the prophecy, but also detailed directions for propitiatory rites; and finally it interrupts the account of the childhood of Heracles. It differs from the usual formal digression in not telling a separate story, but it is none the less a digression, and is in all probability the earliest instance.

The awkwardness of the construction in this idyll has already been noticed. The climax is reached early in the poem; the digression is lacking in incident, and the resumption of the main subject does nothing to restore the reader's interest. The third poem of the Theocritean series, *Heracles the Lion-slayer*, has the same characteristics of construction, but not the same defects.

This poem has been supposed by some to be a fragment. The abrupt opening at first appears to support this theory; but the slightest examination shows that there is no reason for doubting that the effect is intentional. In the first three lines the two persons of the dialogue are clearly indicated; they are an old husbandman and a stranger; in the next three lines we learn that the stranger has asked the way, and the mention of Augeas in line 7 prepares us to recognise the inquirer as Heracles. Even to a reader who did not connect Augeas with Heracles, there would be no diffi-

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culty, for the identity of the stranger does not matter in the least at the opening of the poem. The abruptness is in fact a most striking example of a device regularly used in epyllion. Horace's famous lines on the epic poet,

"Semper ad eventum festinat et in medias res
Non secus ac notas auditorem rapit,"¹

are even more applicable to the epyllion writer. He has less room than the epic poet for elaborate explanations. The main subject is the arrival of Heracles at the pastures of Augeas. Although it is rather long, the interest is well sustained and culminates in the fight with the bull. The digression arises naturally out of this, since Phyleus had been interested in the story of the Nemean lion, and is reminded of it when he sees the strength of Heracles. His question leads to Heracles' story, which is a formal digression, adding a second subject, which is quite distinct from the first, although connected with it.

This is certainly the earliest extant instance in which the digression is fully developed, since in the *Infant Heracles* there is no second story. The *Hecale* had a digression, but the surviving fragments do not allow of a detailed study of its characteristics. It is necessary, therefore, to examine the story of the Nemean lion in some detail since it possesses most of the characteristics which are found in digressions in the Latin epyllia.

The narrative is contained, as many digressions are, in a speech made by one of the characters in the main story, and is of considerable length, occupying nearly one-third of the whole poem. The length of the digres-

¹ Hor., *A.P.*, 148-149.

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sion in proportion to the main subject may vary a good deal. In the *Europa* and apparently in the *Hecale* the digressions are short; in the Latin epyllia on the other hand they tend to be long. Heracles' story is longer in proportion to the whole poem than any other digression in extant Greek epyllion, but shorter than the majority of those in the Latin epyllia.

The slaying of the Nemean lion is the climax of the poem. There is no drop in interest as in the *Infant Heracles*; rather the interest increases as the poem goes on, and is intensified in the digression. The main subject in fact is used to lead up to Heracles' story, which is really, in spite of its apparently casual introduction, the more important of the two subjects. Such an arrangement of the subjects occurs twice in Latin epyllion—in the *Peleus and Thetis* of Catullus, and in a still more marked degree in the *Aristæus* of Vergil.¹ There is, however, in Latin no example in which the main subject is not resumed after the digression.

It may also be noted that the digression contains both a parallel to and a contrast with the main narrative. In this instance the device of a contrasted style is not employed; the whole poem is descriptive, and the speeches are used only for description or to serve as links between the various pictures. The subjects, however, supply both parallel and contrast; the fight with the bull leads up to the fight with the lion; in both instances Heracles defeats an animal by sheer physical strength; but the bull is a domestic animal and the scene is laid in the pastures, while the lion is a wild beast, which is hunted in the forests and mountains.

¹ It was perhaps also intended in the *Culex*.

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It is clear then that in this poem the digression is no chance development. It has been very carefully constructed and brought into relation with the main narrative. The two subjects form an elaborate whole, in which the various parts are introduced with apparent carelessness. Technically there is a great advance on the loose and clumsy construction of the *Infant Heracles*, though no picture in *Heracles the Lion-slayer* has quite the charm and spontaneity of the rapidly-shifting scenes in Amphitryon's house. The *Infant Heracles* may owe its combination of subjects to chance, but it is clear that the more careful and elaborate construction of *Heracles the Lion-slayer* is deliberate. We have here an example of a highly artificial poem conforming to certain recognised rules. Unfortunately we have no means of knowing exactly when or how those rules originated: but their existence is proved by the fact that from *Heracles the Lion-slayer* to the *Aristæus* of Vergil all epyllia approximate more or less to a single form; moreover, though Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* is not bound by its rules, he has nevertheless included several epyllia which conform to the type.

The Theocritean poems show three stages of the development of the epyllion form. In general conception and atmosphere, however, all three poems are alike. They are not in any sense epic except in dealing with epic heroes and scenes. There is no complexity or development of plot; character is either completely ignored or only indicated by the slightest touches. The epic setting gives an atmosphere of romance, but the treatment is realistic, and the purpose of the poet is to present a number of vivid pictures. The narrative

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is there, but it matters very little; the various incidents are successful in proportion as the reader can reconstruct the pictures more or less vividly, and through them fancy himself in that imaginary world to which the epic idyll belongs.

II

The Theocritean tradition was followed by the later pastoral poets, Moschus and Bion. Moschus was a pupil of Aristarchus,¹ and his poems must therefore be ascribed to the latter half of the second century B.C. Little of his work remains; we have five short idylls or fragments of idylls, one epigram and one epyllion, the *Europa*; two other poems have been ascribed to him, the *Megara*,² which may be his, and the *Lament for Bion*, which is probably the work of a later poet.

Those who hold that Moschus wrote the *Lament for Bion* regard Bion as a younger contemporary of Theocritus. But Suidas and other authorities name the pastoral poets in the order Theocritus, Moschus, Bion;³ and Suidas expressly calls Moschus ὁ δεύτερος ποιητῆς

¹ Suidas s.v. Moschus.

² The date and author of the *Megara* are uncertain. It is not a true epyllion, but rather a dramatic idyll in epic metre. It consists of a speech by Megara, who laments the sorrows that Heracles has brought upon her, and an answer by Alcmena, who relates a dream, which signifies the death of Heracles. Six lines of narrative separate the two speeches. The poem has no traces of epyllion form, although the speeches might very well be a digression in an epyllion. There is, however, no reason to suppose that the *Megara* is not complete as it stands.

³ Suidas s.v. Theocritus.

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μετὰ Θεόκριτον.¹ This language is most unnatural if Bion is really the earlier of the two, for it can hardly be taken to denote order of merit. Moreover, the poem itself gives the impression that it was written shortly after the death of Bion, whereas, if Moschus wrote it of a contemporary of Theocritus, he was lamenting for a poet who had been dead for about a hundred years. The ascription to Moschus has little evidence to support it, and the words

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τοι
Ἀύσονικᾶς ὀδύνας μέλπω μέλος²

suggest that the author was an Italian. Thus the most probable period for Bion is the end of the second century, while the author of the *Lament*, who speaks of himself as a pupil and heir of Bion,³ seems to have been an Italian of the time of Sulla.⁴

Bion's works are represented by the long dirge for Adonis, and a number of short idylls and fragments. Among them is included the opening of an epic idyll on the love of Achilles and Deidamia.

The *Europa* of Moschus and the *Achilles* of Bion are the sole representatives of the later epic idyll. The *Achilles* is too fragmentary to add very much to our knowledge. It opens with a short dialogue between two shepherds, one of whom asks for a song. The other begins by telling how Achilles, disguised as a

¹ Suidas s.v. Moschus. ² Mosch., iii., 93-94. ³ Mosch., iii., 95-97.

⁴ This theory of the dates is due to Bücheler (*De Bucolicorum Græcorum aliquot carminibus*. Rheinisches Museum 1875., xxx. p. 33.). For the contrary view, see A. Croiset, *Histoire de la Littérature Grecque*, Tome V., p. 250. The late date of the *Lament* is supported by the version of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice in ll. 122-125. See p. 185 below.

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maiden in the house of Lycomedes, fell in love with Deidamia. Here the fragment breaks off in the middle of a speech of Achilles. It is not clear whether the poem was mainly idyllic or narrative in character, but the pastoral setting and the association with Theocritus suggest the idyllic type. The subject, however, is important; it is a love-story involving intrigue, such as was very popular with the later Alexandrians.

In the *Europa* we have a complete example of the later epic idyll. It opens abruptly with Europa's dream of two continents striving for her possession. She rises in the morning, and goes out to the seashore with her maidens to gather flowers. Here the story of Io is introduced as a digression; pictures of her wanderings in the shape of a heifer, of her restoration to human form and of the slaying of Argus with the birth of the peacock are engraved upon the golden basket which Europa carries. Zeus beholds the maidens and, taking the form of a bull, bears Europa to Crete. The journey over the sea is fully described, and contains the well-known lines:

ἦ δ' ἄρ' ἐφεζομένη Ζηνὸς βοέοις ἐπὶ νώτοις
τῇ μὲν ἔχεν ταύρου δολιχὸν κέρας, ἐν χερὶ δ' ἄλλη
εἴρυε πορφυρέην κόλπου πτύχα, ὄφρα κε μή μιν
δεύοι ἐφελκόμενον πολιῆς ἁλὸς ἄσπετον ὕδωρ.
κολπώθη δ' ὥμοισι πέπλος βαθὺς Εὐρωπείης,
ἱστίον οἶά τε νηὸς, ἐλαφρίζεσκε δὲ κούρην.¹

The poem ends with a short dialogue, in which Europa utters her doubts and regrets, and the bull reveals her destiny. The conclusion of the story, containing the

¹ Mosch., ii., 125-130.

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arrival in Crete and the bridal of Zeus and Europa, is given in a few lines.

Technically the *Europa* is a faultless poem. It is a genuine idyll, for the narrative links are brief and clear, while the pictures are developed in great detail. There are two principal scenes: the first shows Europa and her maidens in the meadow and the bull appearing among them; the second Europa's journey over the sea. In addition to these we have slighter pictures of the striving women in the dream and the story of Io in the digression. Both pictures and narrative are perfectly proportioned, never becoming wearisome through over-development or obscurity. The digression, artificial as it is, appears to be naturally introduced, and conforms to the rule, which must by now have been definitely established, that a digression must contain a parallel to and a contrast with the main subject. In the *Europa* the parallel lies in the subject: Io is also a mortal maiden loved by Zeus. There is contrast too in the details, since in each story one character is in animal form, but in the one instance it is Zeus and in the other the maiden. The principal contrast, however, is supplied by the style; in the main subject it is narrative, the descriptions being introduced by means of the narrative; in the digression it is purely descriptive.

Apart from its perfection of technique the *Europa* is a charming poem. It does not reach the level of the best work of Theocritus; it lacks, for example, the romantic beauty of atmosphere, which distinguishes the *Hylas*. Theocritus has the power of creating a world of the imagination; Moschus cannot get beyond the painting of a picture; it is a delightful picture, full of grace and

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fancy, but it does not give the illusion of reality. Nevertheless, granting this limitation, Moschus is a master in his own line. The epyllion as a whole constantly suffers from the inability of the poets to overcome the artificiality of the form; faults of overelaboration appear as in the *Peleus and Thetis* of Catullus, or of obscurity and self-consciousness as in the *Ciris*. But Moschus has none of these failings; his touch is light and assured, his conception is clear, and his pictures are vivid. Catullus owes much to him, but in spite of superior genius, fails to match him in technique.

IV

THE HECALE OF CALLIMACHUS

It is most unfortunate that the *Hecale* of Callimachus has not survived. Scanty as the fragments are, they indicate that the poem represented the Alexandrian school at its best and was the masterpiece of Callimachus himself. But apart from its artistic value it seems to have been the first true narrative epyllion, and to have served as a pronouncement on modern epic form by one who was recognised as a master. Thus it is of the greatest importance to the study of the epyllion. The remains of the *Hecale* are tantalising in the extreme. A considerable number of fragments survive, but frequently they consist only of single lines, parts of lines or isolated words. As they are mostly quoted in scholia or lexica, they are often quite valueless from the point of view of a reconstruction. The longer fragments preserved on a papyrus and the Rainer board are more helpful, but the textual difficulties at several points render interpretation hopeless. Certain details of plot and treatment can be gathered, but it is impossible to form any certain conclusion about the order of events or the method of their introduction. That guess-work in such a case is dangerous is clearly shown by the fact that the discovery of the Rainer fragment added to the poem a long incident which had not been taken into consideration in any previous reconstruction, although it was known to occur in the *Hecale*.

The Hecale of Callimachus

On the other hand the mention of an incident does not necessarily imply that it was treated in full. The extant work of Callimachus is rich in allusions and there were probably many in the *Hecale* also.

The subject of the poem is given in an epigram of Crinagoras:

Καλλιμάχου τὸ τορευτὸν ἔπος τόδε· δὴ γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ
ὦνῆρ τοὺς Μουσέων πάντας ἔσεισε κάλως.
ἀεῖδει δ' Ἑκάλης τε φιλοξείνοιο καλιῆν
καὶ Θησεῖ Μαραθῶν οὗς ἐπέθηκε πόνους·
τοῦ σοὶ καὶ νεαρῶν χειρῶν σθένος εἴη ἀρέσθαι,
Μάρκελλε, κλεινοῦ τ' αἶνον ἵσον βίότου.¹

This gives the two main themes of the poem, the hospitality of Hecale and the capture of the bull of Marathon by Theseus. It is the fullest statement of the subject which we possess, for, though Plutarch tells the story in his life of Theseus, he mentions Philochorus² as his authority, and there is nothing to show that he was following Callimachus. Thus for the arrangement and treatment of the incidents we are entirely dependent on the extant fragments.

Any consideration of detail must depend upon the view held with regard to the length of the poem. On this point there is some direct evidence. That it was not a very long poem is clear from the fact that it was evidently a single book. No reference is made by any authority to more than one, and, as in the various quotations preserved from the *Aitia*, there is definite mention of four books, absence of such mention in the

¹ Anth., Pal., ix., 545.

² Plutarch., *Theseus*, xiv.

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numerous quotations from the *Hecale* seems conclusive. But a single book might vary very considerably in length. In this connection the well-known statement of Callimachus himself,

τὸ (γὰρ) μέγα βιβλίον ἴσον

τῷ μεγάλῳ κακῷ¹

is of great importance. τὸ μέγα βιβλίον, whether it refers to epic poetry or merely to the size of the papyrus roll, is probably a taunt directed against Apollonius, whose books have an average length of 1481 lines.² Thus the *Hecale* might easily contain seven or eight hundred lines, and still be considered a short poem.³ August Couat⁴ in his analysis of the poem, written before the discovery of the new fragments, suggested that it was not longer than the *Delos*, which contains three hundred and twenty-six lines. Later evidence would seem to prove that it was considerably longer. The Scholiast on the *Hymn to Apollo*⁵ says ἐγκαλεῖ διὰ τούτων τοὺς σκώπτοντας αὐτὸν μὴ δύνασθαι ποιῆσαι μέγα ποίημα, ὅθεν ἡναγκάσθη ποιῆσαι τὴν Ἑκάλην.

It may or may not be true that the *Hecale* was the answer to a challenge, but the Scholiast could hardly have

¹ Call., fr. 359.

² Callimachus did not, of course, live to see the present version of the *Agonautica*, but the books of the early version are not likely to have been short.

³ It was apparently only the long *epic* which Callimachus condemned. The *Aitia* can hardly be called a short poem, since it appears from the condition of the papyrus containing the long fragments that a book had an average length of at least seven hundred and fifty lines. Thus the four books had a total of at least three thousand lines. The separate books, however, were short.

⁴ *Poésie alexandrine*, p. 389.

⁵ Call., *Hymn* ii. 106.

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written in this style if it had not been considerably longer than any of the hymns.¹

The external evidence, then, amounts to this: the *Hecale* was an epic poem, occupying a single book, and therefore a short poem as compared with grand epic; but it was long enough for the Scholiast to call it a long poem as compared with other epic works of Callimachus.

Some evidence as regards the length can be gathered from the fragments themselves. Ida Kapp² has made a collection of all the passages, whether Callimachean or anonymous, which may be reasonably attributed to the *Hecale*; they amount to about two hundred and forty lines or parts of lines. Nearly a hundred of these are known to belong to the *Hecale* and about thirty more are, on internal evidence, almost certainly from the same source. We also know that about forty lines, which are missing between the fragments on the Rainer board, belonged to the Erichthonius digression, and did not contribute to the main story at all. That is to say that, if the poem originally consisted of about three hundred lines, we actually possess nearly a third of it, and in all probability can account for more than half. Yet if the story were not otherwise known, it would be impossible to reconstruct it with any certainty from these fragments. The only one which would give any real clue would be the first column of the Rainer board, which describes the victorious return of Theseus.

¹ Couat takes the *Hecale*, not as an answer to the challenge, but as an act of defiance; but the words of the Scholiast distinctly suggest a long poem.

² *Callimachi Hecalæ Fragmenta*. Diss. Berlin. 1915.

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The Rainer fragments¹ show clear indications of belonging to a poem of some length. They are inscribed on a wooden board, which was found in Egypt, and is now in the papyri collection of the Archduke Rainer in the Royal Library at Vienna. Only the upper part of the board is preserved, since it has at some time been broken horizontally, and the lower part has disappeared. It is divided into four columns, each containing about fifteen lines of the *Hecale*. The text is in fair condition, except in the third column, where it is very uncertain in places. On the reverse side are two columns containing a part of the messenger's speech from the *Phænissæ* of Euripides, and by calculation of the number of lines missing from this speech it has been estimated that three-fifths of the board are lost, and that the passage originally consisted of about a hundred and forty lines. The upper edge is pierced with holes, showing that the board was hung on a wall, and the obvious inference is that it was designed for use in a school.

The first column is well preserved and describes the return of Theseus with the bull and the rejoicings of the peasants. In the second, third and fourth we find a long digression giving the story of Erichthonius told in the course of a conversation between two female characters whose identity is uncertain. This passage was certainly in Ovid's mind when he told the story of the crow and the raven in the *Metamorphoses*.² How the story was worked in it is impossible to conjecture,

¹ I. Kapp, fr. 58; 60; 62; 64; *Callimachus*, pp. 246-252. Loeb Classical Library.

² Ov., *Met.*, ii., 531 ff.

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but irrelevance had no terrors for an Alexandrian poet. The digression must have begun some lines before the beginning of the second column and seems to come to an end in the course of the fourth; this gives a length of at least eighty lines. It may be argued that a longer digression occurs in *Heracles the Lion-slayer*; this is a poem of only two hundred and eighty-one lines and the story of the Nemean lion occupies nearly a hundred lines. But the cases are not parallel; in *Heracles the Lion-slayer* the digression is the most important part, and the pastoral opening forms a long introduction to it. The story of Erichthonius can only have been a side issue in the *Hecale*, and only a poem of considerable length could have space for an entirely subsidiary digression of eighty lines.

It is clear that there was much detailed description in the *Hecale*. We have certain indications of an account of Hecale and her house and of the meal given to Theseus.¹ There are also two fragments of a conversation between Theseus and Hecale preserved on a papyrus.² The lines are much defaced, but it is clear that the first passage contains the end of a speech by Theseus in which he asks Hecale to tell him her story. In the second passage someone is speaking and the verb

¹ Call., fr. 41; 50; 63; 64; 66b; 66c. Ovid may have followed Callimachus in his description of the meal given to the gods by Baucis and Philemon. (*Met.*, viii., 637 ff.). With fr. 66c, *παλαίθεα κἄλα καθήρει*, cf. *ramaliaque arida tecto Detulit.* (*Met.*, viii., 644-645.)

This theory was first put forward by Nägele in a work entitled *Callimachi Hecale* (*Opuscula Philologica*. Vol. II. Bonn. 1845.). His reconstruction is now completely out of date since the discovery of the new fragments.

² *Pap. del soc. Ital.*, ii., 133. I. Kapp, fr. 37 and 41.

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μέμνημαι suggests that it is Hecale. Wilamowitz¹ concludes that about thirty-two lines are missing between the two fragments. The first line of the fragment contains the words, ἐ]ς Μαραθῶνα κατέρχομαι, and though only a few words remain, it is clear that Theseus has replied to a question of Hecale and is now asking for her story.² Theseus must have given some account of himself, and Hecale's speech, if Wilamowitz is right, must have occupied between thirty and forty lines at least. Thus the conversation was of a length, which would be appropriate to a long poem.

The evidence of the fragments then agrees with the implication of the Scholiast that the *Hecale* was a long poem, although, considered as an epic, it was short. It is impossible to state the actual length with any certainty, but the difficulty of making any definite reconstruction from the extant fragments suggests that we do not possess more than one-fifth or one-sixth of the whole.

The story of Hecale is told most fully by Plutarch.³ He states that she received and entertained Theseus on his way to fight the bull of Marathon; that she vowed a sacrifice to Zeus for his safe return; that she died before he came back; and that by his command a festival was held to Zeus Hecaleius in honour of her hospitality. References to her story are not numerous, but all of them agree with Plutarch. Her age, poverty and hospitality are several times mentioned. In all

¹ *Cit.*, I. Kapp, fr. 37.

² τῶς ἄρ' ἐμεῦ μεμάθηκας ἃ μ' εἶρεο· καὶ σὺ [δὲ] μαῖα, λέξον, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐμοί τι ποθὴ σέο τιτθὸν ἀκοῦσαι.

³ Plutarch, *Theseus.*, xiv.

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probability there was only a single version of the story, namely that given by Plutarch, and it is most likely that Callimachus told the same story. But Plutarch does not mention Callimachus, and it cannot be proved that they agreed on every point. The epigram of Crinagoras¹ already quoted is the most definite and most important statement of the subject.

From the name of the poem it is clear that Hecale was regarded as the most important character. Two fragments probably belong to an opening paragraph describing her. One of these:

τίον δέ ἐ πάντες ὀδῖται
ἦρα φιλοξενίης· ἔχε γὰρ τέγος ἀκλήιστον²

refers to her hospitality. The other:

τοῦτο γὰρ αὐτὴν
κωμῆται κάλεον περιηγέες³

seems to refer to her name and was probably followed by the supposed explanation of it⁴—a point which would have appealed to Callimachus. There is no indication of the manner of Theseus' introduction, and it is not clear whether any part of his adventures was told at this point. One fragment certainly belonging to the *Hecale* has a reference to the sword of Ægeus, and this is probably correctly joined with an anonymous fragment. The two lines:

¹ See p. 73.

² Call., fr. 41.

³ Call., fr. 66b.

⁴ ἐ καλεῖν. *E.M.S.M.* 'Εκάλη ἡ πρὸς αὐτὴν πάντας καλοῦσα.

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εὐτ' αὖν ὁ παῖς ἀπὸ μὲν γυαλὸν λίθον ἀγκάσσασθαι
ἄρκιος ἢ χεῖρεσσιν ἐλὼν Αἰδῆψιον ἄορ¹

may have occurred here. But it is equally possible that they occurred in Theseus' narration to Hecale. The early adventures of Theseus, however, form a lengthy series, and if they were included at all, it is reasonable to suppose that they were told by the poet in the rapid narration of which we have an example in the *Hymn to Zeus*.² Ovid in the seventh book of the *Metamorphoses*³ actually has such a passage narrating the adventures of Theseus, and it is not impossible that he was imitating the Hecale.

As Hecale was described in detail it may fairly be assumed that there was a full description of Theseus. Indeed the contrast between them must have been prominent throughout the poem. One line may refer to the hero's appearance:

ἄρμοι που κακείνω ἐπέτρεχεν ἄβρὸς Ἰουλος.⁴

It may be supposed that Theseus asked for hospitality. Ida Kapp suggests that he was driven to do so by a storm, but the contention rests on eight fragments, seven of which are either anonymous or not definitely attributed to the *Hecale*.⁵ The entertainment of Theseus

¹ Fr. anon. 331 and Call. fr. 51a. Another fragment of Callimachus (66).

ἐν μὲν γὰρ Τροίῃ κολουραῖη ὑπὸ πέτρῃ
θῆκε σὺν ἀρπιδεσσι

probably belongs to the same passage.

² Call., *Hymns*, i., 10-53.

³ Ov., *Met.*, vii., 433-450.

⁴ Call., fr. 44.

⁵ I. Kapp, fr. 7-14. The only one which certainly belongs to the *Hecale* (Call., fr. 47) contains a reference to a well-known sign of rain; but there is no evidence to show where it occurred.

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and the meal provided for him were certainly described in some detail, for Pliny mentions some of the herbs that were set before him.¹ It is reasonable to suppose that the meal preceded the conversation of which a fragment is preserved in the papyrus already mentioned.² This establishes the fact that Hecale asked Theseus to tell his story, that he gave some account of himself and then in his turn questioned his hostess. He may have told some part of his adventures at this point and most probably he gave the history of the bull of Marathon. This must have occurred somewhere in the poem and it would be most natural and dramatic in the development of the plot if it were told by Theseus himself. It would seem that Hecale also told her story, and there are indications that her character was sketched with delicate touches of realism, which must have given a particular charm to this part of the poem.³ It has always been assumed that Theseus spent the night in Hecale's house. That the action of the poem covered one night at least is clear from the description of morning in the fourth column of the Rainer board. Some doubt has been cast on the correctness of the order of these columns by Joseph Zingerle, who concludes that column I. should follow column IV.⁴ Whatever arrangement is correct, this night cannot have been spent by Theseus at Hecale's house. If the order is right as it stands, the reference is clearly to the night following the capture of the bull, for Theseus leaves

¹ Pliny, *N.H.*, xxii., 88 and xxvi., 82. Cf. Call., fr. 50.

² *Pap. del Soc. Ital.* ii., 133. I. Kapp, fr. 37 and 41.

³ Cf. Suidas, s.v. ναὶ μὰ τό . . . καὶ Ἑκάλη εἶπε "ναὶ μὰ τόν" καὶ οὐκέτι ἐπάγει τὸν θεόν, ῥυθμίζει δὲ ὁ λόγος πρὸς εὐσέβειαν.

⁴ See Note I. The Order of the Columns on the Rainer Board.

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Hecale before the fight. If the description of his return follows the description of dawn, we must still assume that the bull was captured on the day before, as the twenty-two lines missing between the columns would not allow sufficient space for his parting with Hecale and the fight. Accordingly, if he spent a night at Hecale's house, the action must have covered two nights. This is not impossible, for it need not be assumed that Callimachus wished to confine the action to two days and a night. But as a matter of fact there is not a particle of evidence that Theseus received hospitality for the night. Want of evidence in the fragments is of course inconclusive, but it is perhaps worth noticing that in Ovid's story of Philemon and Baucis,¹ which probably owes something to the *Hecale*, the gods are entertained at a meal, which, like that of Theseus, is closely described, but they do not spend the night at Philemon's house. Without further evidence the point cannot be decided, but on the whole it seems more likely that the events were compressed into as short a time as possible.²

Either on the afternoon of the same day or the morning of the next day Theseus left the house of Hecale and met with the bull of Marathon. The fight was certainly described in detail, for Crinagoras mentions it as the second subject of the poem. We have no certain fragment dealing with this incident but a citation from Callimachus

θηρὸς ἐρωήσας ὀλοὸν κέρας ³

¹ Ov., *Met.*, viii., 614-724.

² I. Kapp's fragments (46-49) supporting the theory of the night spent at Hecale's house are all anonymous.

³ Call., fr. 249.

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probably belongs here. We have the picture of the conquered bull in the first column of the Rainer board. If this column should be read in its present position, this picture must immediately follow the description of the fight. It is a passage of great charm and the language is simple and direct. Theseus, who is leading the bull, reassures the terrified peasants, and directs that a messenger shall bear the news to Athens. The peasants then throw leaves over him and rejoice. In all probability the lines have their true place here. The contention of Zingerle that they must belong to the end of the poem has little evidence to support it. The latest point at which they can stand is that immediately preceding the meeting with the funeral of Hecale which must have taken place on the day after the fight, since the dawn here described follows the capture of the bull. There are, however, two points which strongly suggest that these lines immediately follow the fight. The first is the mention in the first line of Theseus sheathing his sword. It is not clear whether he had actually used it, or whether he had laid it aside to wrestle with the bull; but in either case he would naturally return it to the sheath as soon as the bull was conquered. The second point is the message to Ægeus; this must surely be sent immediately after the victory.

If we assume that the first column should be read in the place where it stands, the substance of the missing lines may be roughly conjectured. In the second column the digression has begun, and it is continued until the seventh line of the fourth column. The rest of the fourth column is occupied with a description of dawn. Accordingly the coming of night must have been men-

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tioned in the lost lines of the first column, and this would be followed by the introduction of the digression, which gives the story of the crow, who offended Athena by announcing to her the disobedience of the daughters of Cecrops. The fourth column establishes that this incident is told in the course of a conversation between two speakers; but there are two problems connected with it: how was it introduced? and who are the speakers?

Any theory of the introduction must be purely conjectural. The connecting link between the main story and the digression in poems of this type is often extremely slight. If the *Peleus and Thetis* of Catullus had come down to us in a fragmentary condition, it would have been impossible to discover the connection between the Ariadne story and the main subject. Similarly in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid often introduces a story merely because it has a chance point of contact with the previous one. The only point of contact that can be discovered in this case is the bearing of news. The news of Theseus' victory is brought to Athens; the crow and the raven, whose punishments are coupled both here and in the *Metamorphoses*, are both carriers of news. This is a very weak connecting link but not more so than several used by Ovid.

For the speakers there is some evidence. In the fourth column occurs the line:

τὴν μὲν ἄρ' ὥς φαμένην ὕπνος λάβε, τὴν δ' αἰούσαν.

This proves that both speakers are female. The crow is certainly the speaker in the second and third columns, and it is generally agreed that the whole story is told

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by the crow, who finally prophesies the fate of the raven.¹ The listener has been supposed to be Hecale, and there is no certain evidence against this theory. But the following considerations may be put forward as possibly throwing some light on the matter.

The story of Hecale and Theseus is a perfectly simple and rational one, whereas the digression is full of irrational elements. It would be a bad fault in taste to associate Hecale with the irrational part of the poem and especially to show her actually listening to the talking crow. We cannot of course assume that the *Hecale* was free from faults of this kind, and the contemporaries of Callimachus may have had no objection.

Ovid in telling the same story makes the crow the speaker and the raven the listener. The gender of *κόραξ* puts this out of the question, but it is highly probable that the listener here is another bird.

The story of the owl, who succeeded the crow in Athena's favour, was evidently included. Ovid also mentions the owl and makes the crow complain of her preferment.² Suidas quotes a line from the *Hecale*:

αἴθ' ὄφελος θανέειν ἢ ὕστατον ὀρχήσασθαι,³

and remarks that the reference is to the owl, and, in view of Ovid's account, it is a fairly safe assumption that this line belongs to the crow's speech. The second person may be merely rhetorical; but on the other hand it

¹ Gomperz holds that the speakers are Hecale and a friend, and that the speaker is quoting the words of the crow.

² Ovid., *Met.*, ii., 564, 589-595.

³ Suidas, s.v., αἴθ' ὄφελος. . . . ἐπειδὴ τὴν γλαῦκα ὅταν λάβῃσι τὰ παῖδια περιόγουσιν, ἡ δὲ μὴ βλέπουσα δι' ἡμέρας ὥσπερ ὀρχεῖται· ἡ ὅταν πληγῇ, τελευτῶσα στρέφεται ὥσπερ ὀρχουμένη. Καλλίμαχος ἐν Ἑκάλῃ λέγει περὶ αὐτῆς.

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may mean that the owl is the listener. Moreover, there is a line quoted from Callimachus in the *Etymologicum Magnum* in which the owl is the speaker:

ἀλλὰ θεῆς, ἥ τις με διάκτορον ἔλλαχε Παλλάς.¹

It is most probable that this line should be referred to this part of the *Hecale*, for it is hardly likely that Callimachus treated the same episode in two poems. If this assumption be allowed, we may also assume that the digression was a conversation between the owl and the crow. There is some further justification in the fact that Ovid mentions all the three birds previously mentioned by Callimachus, and that his narrative takes the form of a dialogue between two of them. In telling a story which has already been told by an earlier poet, Ovid always introduces variations; it would be entirely characteristic of his method to adopt the device of the talking birds, but to vary the speakers.

The conclusion, resting as it does on a quotation whose exact source is not given, must remain in doubt. The utmost that can be said is that there is no evidence that either of the speakers is a woman, whereas there is good evidence that one is a bird, and some slight support for the theory that the second is also a bird.

The digression itself does not seem to have been of great interest. What we have of it is very inferior in quality to the descriptions in the first and fourth columns. The story has no particular interest, but it is one of the obscure myths, which were so popular with the Alexandrian school, and no doubt it gave opportuni-

¹ E.M., s.v., διάκτορος παρὰ δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις ποιηταῖς ἀπλῶς ἐπὶ τοῦ διακόνου τίθεται. Καλλίμαχος ἐπὶ γλαυκὸς τὸ ἐπίθετον· ἀλλὰ θεῆς κτλ.

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ties for a display of learning; for both reasons it would appeal to Callimachus. There is not sufficient evidence to decide whether the practice of introducing a parallel and a contrast was followed in relation to the subjects. There was, however, apparently a contrast of style, since the main narrative seems to have been simple and direct, while the digression is obscure and allusive.

There is no evidence for any passage dealing with the death of Hecale. As far as it is possible to judge from the existing fragments, there are three points at which her death may have occurred. It may have followed her parting with Theseus; it may have occurred during the night after his victory; or it may have been placed as late as the next morning, closely following the last lines of the Rainer board. If she died shortly after Theseus left her house, we may suppose that some account was given at that point; but if her death was later, the first mention of it must have been made after the description of dawn, for the night seems to have been entirely occupied by the digression. Possibly no actual account was given at all, and she was found dead by her neighbours; this would be the more dramatic method; but conjecture is useless here.

There is not much to be gathered about the conclusion of the poem. The climax must have been the meeting of the triumphant Theseus with Hecale's funeral. Some lines from the *Priapea*¹ suggest that Hecale had actually

¹ Quædam annosior Hectoris parente
Cumææ soror, ut puto, Sibyllæ,
Æqualis tibi, quam domum revertens
Theseus repperit in rogo iacentem.

Priapea, xii., 1-4.

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been laid upon the funeral pyre. The beautiful lines addressed to her, evidently by Theseus, still survive:

ἴθι, πρηεῖα γυναικῶν,
τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν ἀνίαι θυμαλγέες οὐ περόωσιν.
πολλάκι σεῖο <δὲ>, μαῖα, φιλοξείνοιο καλιῆς
μνησόμεθα· ξυνὸν γὰρ ἐπαύλιον ἔσκεν ἅπασιν.¹

The funeral of Hecale would seem a fitting end for the poem, and it may have ended here. But it is also extremely probable that an account of the rites of Zeus Hecaleius was included. Callimachus was notoriously interested in origins, and would hardly have neglected such an opportunity. The account would not necessarily be very long, and would probably be in the learned and allusive style of many passages of this type in the hymns.

It is possible to draw certain conclusions about the character of the poem as a whole. The literary merit was undoubtedly high. Crinagoras praises it in his epigram, calling it τὸ τορευτὸν ἔπος, and some of the fragments give evidence of great beauty. The first column of the Rainer board is a vivid and dramatic piece of writing in simple and beautiful language. The picture of dawn in the fourth column has beauty of another kind. These two fragments suggest that the heroic and homely elements were mingled with great charm. Again there is in the words spoken to the dead Hecale a pathos which reminds us of the best of Callimachus' epigrams.

It is clear that the *Hecale* was an epyllion and not simply an epic idyll, although it undoubtedly retained some

¹ Call., fr. 131.

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characteristics of the idyll. It must be considered as epic because the fragments make it obvious that the main interest was concentrated on the story and the characters. The plot was evidently carefully constructed, the main incidents, namely the hospitality of Hecale and the fight with the bull, standing out against a background of minor incidents. The treatment, both in the main subject and the digression was dramatic; we have evidence of various speakers, and of speeches of considerable length. All this is characteristic of epic rather than idyll.¹

It seems too that Callimachus, in the character of Hecale at least, was aiming at psychological truth. This is a definite advance on the epic idyll, in which the characters are merely the central point of the picture. Hecale was evidently more than this, for her name seems to suggest a distinct personality to the various authors who mention her. Possibly the character of Theseus also was carefully studied, but of this we have no evidence. It is clear that Hecale was the centre of interest, Theseus being secondary in importance.

Another very interesting divergence from the idyllic style is found in the use of a double plot. Hecale and Theseus are connected with one another by two chance meetings, and their stories are two separate threads which are skilfully worked into a single whole; yet throughout the two plots remain distinct. This is unexampled in any extant epyllion; there are usually two stories, but one is always a digression. The second

¹ Dramatic treatment is found in the epic idylls, but it usually has the purpose of increasing the vividness of the picture, rather than of developing plot and character.

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may have no real connection with the first, as in the *Peleus and Thetis*; or it may be a narrative which has interest for the persons of the first, as in the *Culex* and the *Aristæus*: but there is no true interweaving of plot. This complex type of plot is not found again until the *Æneid*, for there is no secondary plot in the *Argonautica*. It was left for Vergil to give to his minor characters an interest apart from, as well as in connection with, the fortunes of his hero.¹

Callimachus was, however, in some measure indebted to the idyll. The Rainer fragments prove that he made use of the realistic pictorial treatment, which is seen at its best in Theocritus. The plot with its various incidents moved against a background of scenes, which were delicately and accurately described. It may be assumed that the background was never permitted to become obtrusive, but it was of considerable importance and added greatly to the charm of the poem.

The style of the *Hecale* must have formed a marked contrast with that of the *Argonautica*. Apollonius gives us a single plot with an enormous wealth of incident. It is a chronicle of the adventures of Jason, and the only real human interest lies in the character of Medea. Thus it frequently becomes tedious in spite of its beauty. Callimachus on the other hand seems to have dealt with a slight but complex plot, and to have achieved an artistic whole by his careful balance of the two stories and by the marked contrast of the two characters portrayed. Whether or no the statement of

¹ This may be noticed especially in the later books, where the influence of Apollonius is far less marked than in the earlier ones.

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the Scholiast about the *Hecale* is true, the implied criticism of Apollonius is perfectly sound.

Theocritus offered the epic idyll as a substitute for grand epic. Callimachus went a step further and produced the epyllion. It is, of course, impossible to draw a definite line of distinction between the two types; but it is clear that there is an enormous difference between the Theocritean idylls and such a poem as the *Ciris*, where the picturesque element is entirely subordinate and often absent altogether. The *Hecale* forms a connecting link. Callimachus, in writing it, probably produced an entirely new form of epic having the characteristics both of an epic and an idyll; but, as has been shown, the surviving fragments suggest that it was most akin to the epic. The next step was taken by the poets who either omitted the idyllic treatment entirely or only introduced it in occasional touches. Of the type of poem thus produced the *Ciris* is a good example; the father of this type was in all probability Euphorion of Chalcis.

V

EUPHORION OF CHALCIS AND PARTHENIUS
OF NICÆA

I

OF the life and work of Euphorion of Chalcis very little is known, but such evidence as there is points to his being a writer of hexameter poems. His elegiac verse may have been confined entirely to epigrams, two of which ¹ are extant; with the exception of these no trace of elegiac verse survives in a considerable number of fragments. It is true that he is twice referred to as an elegiac poet. Probus² calls him *scriptor elegiarum*; Diomedes³ names Propertius, Tibullus and Gallus as Roman writers of elegy *imitati Græcos Callimachum et Euphoriona*. It is possible that both writers were mistaken owing to a very natural confusion. In both instances Gallus and Euphorion are associated, and Gallus was well-known as the imitator and translator of Euphorion.⁴ As the fame of Gallus rested chiefly on his elegies, the commentators may have assumed that Euphorion was also an elegiac poet. Athenæus on the other hand several times calls him ἐποποιός, and Quintilian includes him among the epic poets, mentioning only Callimachus and Philetas as elegiac poets;⁵ more-

¹ *Anth. Pal.*, vi., 279; vii., 651. ² *Ad Verg. Ecl.*, x., 50.

³ *Art. Gramm.*, iii., p. 482. ⁴ Servius *ad Verg. Ecl.*, vi., 72.

⁵ Quint., *Inst. Orat.*, x., i., 56-58.

Euphorion and Parthenius

over, the fragments are definitely epic in style. The evidence is too scanty to warrant the assumption that he did not write elegy, but, if he did, it is curious that we have not a single line, apart from epigrams, which can be definitely ascribed to an elegiac poem.¹

It is clear from the fragments that Euphorion wrote epic, but it is by no means clear to what type of epic his various works belonged. Twenty-one titles have been preserved, but there is little definite evidence to be gained from them. In some instances we have no clue to the subject of the poem; in others the fragments throw some light on the contents without explaining the title. If, however, all the evidence afforded by both titles and fragments is considered, it appears that Euphorion wrote catalogues and short poems, but not grand epic.

Of the twenty-one titles five are completely obscure.² Four others give some ground for conjecture or have very slight evidence attached to them. Meineke³ has conjectured that the *Γέρανος* was the story of a woman among the Pygmies who was turned into a crane. If so, we may fairly conclude that the poem was an epyllion. The title *Ἡσίοδος* also suggests epyllion. The *Κλήτωρ* may have been a *κτίσις* poem, since there was a town of that name in Arcadia. The *Ξένιος* is known to have contained the story of the origin of aconite, and possibly one of the recently discovered fragments

¹ A complete collection of the fragments of Euphorion will be found in J. U. Powell's *Collectanea Alexandrina*. Oxford. 1925.

² *Ἀλέξανδρος, Ἀντιγραφαὶ πρὸς Θεοδωρίδαν, Ἀρτεμίδωρος, Δημοσθένης, Πολυχάρης.*

³ *Analecta Alexandrina*, p. 20.

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of Euphorion should be assigned to it.¹ But the title is obscure, and there is no proof that the narrative occupied the whole poem.

Two poems, the *Ἀραὶ ἢ Ποτηριοκλέπτῃς* and the *Χιλιάδες* were evidently catalogues. The character of the first is sufficiently clear from its title and from a recently discovered fragment which may with certainty be attributed to it.² It was a poem of the *Ibis* type, containing a list of curses directed against some person who had stolen a cup. The *Χιλιάδες* appears to have been a catalogue in five books, and to have dealt with oracles which were fulfilled. Except that it was written in hexameters, it probably resembled the *Alexandra* of Lycophron. It is a reasonable assumption that in these two poems there was little or no genuine narrative.

We may now turn to the poems which are proved by titles or fragments to have been definitely narrative in character. The titles are as follows: *Anius*, *Apollodorus*, *Dionysus*, *Dionysus the Gaper*, *Hippomedon*, *Hyacinthus*, *Inachus*, *Mopsopia*, *Philoctetes*, *Thrax*. This list probably comprises three types of poem, the hymn, the catalogue and the epyllion.

It seems most reasonable to suppose that the *Dionysus* was a hymn, since the title is not a likely one for an epyllion or catalogue. The fragments referring to the sufferings of Dionysus give evidence of narrative, and, as Attic place-names are quoted, the poem may have dealt with the youth of the god and the establishment of his worship; but the remains are too scanty to show whether it was narrative throughout.

¹ *Collectanea Alexandrina*, Euph., fr. 51.

² Euph., fr. 9.

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The *Mopsopia* was certainly a catalogue. Suidas gives the title and explains it thus: *Μοψοπία ἢ Ἀτακτα· ἔχει γὰρ συμμιγείς ἱστορίας· Μοψοπία δ', ὅτι ἡ Ἀττική τὸ πρὶν Μοψοπία ἐκαλεῖτο, . . . καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ ποιήματος ἀποτείνεται εἰς τὴν Ἀττικὴν*.¹ The fragments give no additional evidence, but the general character is sufficiently clear from this statement. The *Inachus* may also have been a catalogue. It certainly told the story of the Argive Caranus, who founded the kingdom of Macedonia,² and Meineke conjectures that it dealt with Argive legends. Probably both poems were ætiological.

The *Thrax* is puzzling. A three-line fragment proves that it contained the story of Amphiaras.³ Parthenius also refers to it two love-stories, those of Harpalyce and Apriate.⁴ But the three incidents appear to have no connection and the title cannot be explained. On the whole the evidence seems to suggest catalogue rather than epyllion, but it may have been an epyllion with considerable digressions.

There remain six titles which may fairly be conjectured to belong to epyllia: *Anius*, *Apollodorus*, *Dionysus Kexhynós*, *Hippomedon*, *Hyacinthus*, and *Philoctetes*. *Anius* was the king of Delos mentioned by Vergil, and Ovid

¹ Suidas s.v. Euphorion.

² Euph., fr. 32. The Scholiast to Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.*, ii., 8, gives the story and adds: *ταῦτα Εὐφορίων ἱστορεῖ ἐν τῇ Ἰστίᾳ καὶ τῷ Ἰνάχῳ*. *Hístia* appears to have been an alternative title.

³ Euph., fr. 23. *τὸν μὲν ἄρ' ἐκ φλοίσβου Ἀσβώτιοι ὤκα φέροντες ὑστάτιον ῥύσαντο κονισαλέσσω ἐθείραις ἵπποι καλὰ νάουσσαν ἐπορνύμενοι Φυσάδειαν*.

Stephen of Byzantium, who quotes these lines, adds *περὶ τῶν ἵππων Ἀμφιαράου*.

⁴ Parth., *Erot. Path.*, xiii., xxvi.

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tells of the miraculous powers of his daughters and how they were saved from captivity by Bacchus who changed them into doves.¹ Two lines only remain of the *Anius*, and they give no clue to the subject, but it is possible that Euphorion was Ovid's source. The title *Apollodorus* reveals nothing and is probably only the name of the person to whom the poem was addressed;² but the subject is known from the fragments, and also from statements by Parthenius and the Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius.³ The poem dealt with the story of Cyzicus, whose name actually occurs in two lines of Euphorion quoted by the Scholiast on Lycophron:

ποικιλόνοους δὲ μέλαθρον . . . ὀρχίλος ἔπητη
Κυζίκου, ὃν δ' ἤεισε κακὸν γάμον ἐχθομένη κρέξ.⁴

Euphorion, however, did not use the version given by Apollonius, in which Cyzicus is killed by the Argonauts, and Cleite, his wife, commits suicide, but a less-known version, which, characteristically, contains an unnatural love-story. The story of Dionysus *Κεχηνώς* is given by Pliny,⁵ and is a Samian variant of Androcles and the lion; the hero extracts a bone from the lion's throat, and later founds a temple to Dionysus in Samos, adding the title *Κεχηνώς*. The subject of the *Hippomedon* cannot be certainly determined, as the name

¹ Verg., *Æn.*, iii., 80 ff. Ov. *Met.*, xiii, 644 ff.

² This is the theory of Meineke, who conjectures that several of the titles are names of the persons addressed. He includes in this class: *Alexander*, *Apollodorus*, *Artemidorus*, *Demosibenes*, and perhaps *Polycharès*. Cf. *Anal. Alex.*, p. 16.

³ Parth., *Erot. Path.*, xxviii. Schol. ad Ap. Rh., i., 1063.

⁴ Euph., fr. 4.

⁵ Pliny, *N.H.*, viii., 16, 57.

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occurs several times in Greek legend. The best-known Hippomedon was one of the Seven against Thebes, but it is more likely that Euphorion's story was that of the Epidamnian Hippomedon who committed suicide after being disappointed in love. The *Hyacinthus* dealt with the legend that the hyacinth sprang from the blood of Hyacinthus. A three-line fragment probably contains the opening lines:

πορφυρέη ὑάκινθε, σὲ μὲν μία φῆμιν αἰοιδῶν
'Ροιτεῖης ἀμάθοισι δεδοπότης Αἰακίδαο
εἶαρος ἀντέλλειν, γεγραμμένα κωκύουσιν.¹

A fragment of the *Philoctetes*,² referring to the death of Iphimachus, who gave food to Philoctetes in Lemnos, indicates that Euphorion told the story of Philoctetes' sufferings on the island.³

There can be little doubt that these six poems were really epyllia; none of the subjects is suitable for grand epic. Indeed there is nothing in the titles or fragments of Euphorion, which can supply any evidence for grand epic. The longer poems appear to have been catalogues of various kinds. It has been shown that there is definite evidence for six epyllia, and it is probable that there were others, since some of the unexplained titles may belong to epyllia. Moreover, we know that Euphorion used subjects which are not included among the titles which we possess. Servius, for example, mentions him in connection with Vergil's

¹ Euph., fr. 40. Probably both versions of the story were included.

² Euph., fr. 44.

³ Tzetzes *ad* Lycoph., 911, mentions that Philoctetes founded the city of Crinissa, giving Euphorion as his authority. Thus the *Philoctetes* may have been a *κρίσις* poem.

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account of Thymætes, Sinon, Laocoon, and Coræbus.¹ It is not to be supposed that every subject ascribed to Euphorion represents a separate epyllion, but it is probable that he wrote epyllia, for which we have now no certain evidence.

Of one hundred and seventy-seven fragments cited by Mr. J. U. Powell in his *Collectanea Alexandrina* only forty-nine are ascribed to definite poems, and in several cases the ascription rests only on a probable conjecture. Thus the fragments are valuable rather for giving general information than for indicating the nature of any particular poem. The subjects cover a wide range and are mostly taken from little-known myths. Some of them serve to connect Euphorion both with his predecessor Callimachus and with the Roman poets. The stories of Coræbus and Anius seem to have been used by Callimachus in the *Aitia*,² and in one of the longer fragments there are reminiscences of the *Hecale*.³ From Euphorion the Roman poets seem to have gathered many stories. Vergil's debt to him has already been mentioned; Ovid has stories of Hyacinthus,⁴ Anius⁵ Niobe⁶ and the origin of aconite.⁷ When so many coincidences of subject can be gathered from the very scanty fragments which still remain, it is impossible not to conclude that Euphorion used his predecessors freely, and was used in his turn by his successors.

¹ Serv. *ad Æn.*, ii., 32, 79, 201, 341.

² Euph., fr. 71 and 2. Call., fr. 13e and Scholiast on Ovid *Ibis*, 475. Vergil probably also followed Euphorion in reference to Anius.

³ Euph., fr. 9. Call., fr. 60 (I. Kapp.) and 66f.

⁴ Ov., *Met.*, x., 162-219.

⁵ Ov., *Met.*, xiii., 632-674.

⁶ Ov., *Met.*, vi., 146-312. Cf. Euph., fr. 102.

⁷ Ov., *Met.*, vii., 406-419. Cf. Euph., fr. 37 and 51.

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The fragments certainly support the charge of obscurity brought against Euphorion by Cicero.¹ They are largely quotations used by lexicographers, grammarians and scholiasts to illustrate obscure words and little-known myths. The longer passages are written in the allusive style which the Alexandrians loved. From an artistic point of view there is nothing in the fragments to make us regret the loss of Euphorion's work, but it is hardly fair to judge him on such scanty material.

In choosing obscure subjects Euphorion was making no innovation, for Callimachus had, on the whole, preferred them. But Euphorion seems to have introduced a different type of story and a new form of treatment. Callimachus, at any rate in the extant poems, shows a strong tendency to use subjects, which give scope either for pathos or humour. At his best he gives us a graceful, allusive narrative, often with a pleasant touch of romance and occasionally with a note of true pathos arising out of simple and natural emotion. Euphorion, on the other hand, clearly had a tendency to use the sensational type of subject.

This point is well illustrated by the subjects chosen from Euphorion by Parthenius. In the *Love Romances*, Euphorion is given as the source of three stories, Harpalyce, Apriate and the first version of Cyzicus.² To these may be added the story of Laodice,³ for, though it is ascribed to Hegesippus, it seems to have been told

¹ Quid? poeta nemo, nemo physicus obscurus? Illi vero. Nimis etiam obscurus Euphorion: at non? Homerus. Uter igitur melior? Cic., *Div.*, ii., 64.

² *Erot. Path.*, xiii., xxvi., xxviii.

³ *Erot. Path.*, xvi.

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by Euphorion as well, since Pausanias¹ declares that Euphorion's story of Laodice is improbable. Moreover, a fragment of Euphorion² refers to the birth of her son Munitus and his death by snake-bite at Olynthus, and this agrees with the version of Parthenius. These four stories are all tragic, and each of them is characterised by motives of guilty love or violence or both combined. The story of Harpalyce is a peculiarly horrible story of crime. It has already been noticed that the unpleasant version of the story of Cyzicus is ascribed to Euphorion.

This type of story was not of course invented by Euphorion, but it is probable that he was responsible for introducing it into the epyllion. We certainly know of no example of it as an epyllion subject earlier than Euphorion, but it is predominant in the *Love Romances* of Parthenius, and was popular with the Latin imitators of Euphorion. It seems probable also that Euphorion, in popularising the criminal love-story, tended to concentrate the interest on the heroine; this is a marked tendency of Parthenius and the Latin poets, and the fact that Euphorion is one of the three authorities most quoted in the *Love Romances* suggests that he may have been partially responsible. He appears to have had a taste for morbid sensation and to have cultivated it for its own sake.

It is not certain whether Euphorion introduced digressions, but it is at least extremely likely that he did so, since the *Hecale* must have been regarded as a model from the time of its publication. The *Ciris* also bears witness that the *Cantores Euphorionis* regarded a

¹ Paus., x., 26, 8.

² Euph., fr. 58.

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digression as an important part of the formal epyllion. Possibly some internal evidence may be found in two of the fragments. The first of these is quoted from the *Hyacinthus*:

Κώκυτός <τοι> μούνος ἀφ' ἔλκεα νύβεν Ἀδωνιν.¹

This line suggests that the story of Adonis was included and, if it was told at any length, it must have constituted a digression. It would be a very suitable one, since a parallel would be secured by the theme of a mortal loved by a god, and a contrast by the development of the tragedy, Hyacinthus being accidentally slain by Apollo, Adonis going to his death in spite of Aphrodite's warning.² The *Hippomedon* also has a suggestive fragment, which may be the opening line of a digression:

τοῖος γὰρ Κυχρεῖος ἐνὶ ψαφαρῇ Σαλαμῖνι.³

Cychreus was a king of Salamis, who delivered his country from a dragon. The subject might well appeal to Euphorion as a little-known story, but, on the other hand, the line gives no evidence that the story was told in full; it may contain only a passing allusion.

Euphorion probably departed from the practice of including a picturesque element in the epyllion. Callimachus in the *Hecale* had already given primary importance to the plot. The *Love Romances* of Parthenius,

¹ Euph., fr. 43. Scheidweiler (*Euphorionis Fragmenta*, 1908.) suggests that the *Hyacinthus* was a catalogue like the *Ἔρωτες ἢ Καλοί* of Phanocles, containing the stories of beautiful youths loved by gods. But the title *Hyacinthus* is against this theory. Catalogues, so far as we have definite evidence, seem always to have borne some title suggesting their character.

² Ovid associates the two stories in the song of Orpheus. Cf. *Met.* x., 162-219 and 503-739.

³ Euph., fr. 30.

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although they are admittedly only very brief summaries, suggest a narrative rather than a picturesque treatment, and the *Ciris*, which may be regarded as a typical epyllion of the school of Gallus, has few picturesque elements. On the other hand Euphorion undoubtedly emphasised the obscure and learned side of Alexandrian poetry. Scanty as the fragments are, they fully justify Cicero's epithet *obscurus*.

The examination of the evidence for Euphorion's epyllia produces a conception of a new type differing very considerably from any previous type. It is unlike the epic idyll in having a definite and perhaps a complicated plot, but it lacks the realistic descriptions of persons and scenes which Callimachus had inherited from the epic idyll. The learned allusiveness of Callimachus degenerates into pedantic obscurity. The love romance becomes increasingly prominent, and crime, violence and unnatural affection are frequently introduced. The epyllion becomes a vehicle for the sensational description of deeds and scenes of horror and for the study of morbid psychology. This conception agrees with the type of epyllion which Parthenius evidently had in mind when he collected subjects for the most noted of the *Cantores Euphorionis*.

II

It has been suggested that Euphorion was the first writer of purely narrative epyllia. Whether he was so or not, it is an undoubted fact that his work exercised great influence on the Roman poets. But the spread of

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that influence and the popularity of the Alexandrian school in Italy were undoubtedly aided by the work of Parthenius of Nicæa.

Little is known of the life of Parthenius, and the dates of his birth and death are uncertain. Suidas states that he was captured by Cinna when the Romans defeated Mithradates, but was spared because of his talent, and lived until the principate of Tiberius. Macrobius¹ records that he was Vergil's tutor in Greek, and we know from his dedicatory letter to the *Love Romances* that he was on friendly terms with Cornelius Gallus.

It is impossible from these statements to fix the date of the birth of Parthenius with any certainty, for the date of his capture is uncertain. Susemihl² refers it to the year 73 B.C., when Nicæa was taken, but the language of Suidas would more naturally suggest the final defeat of Mithradates in 66 B.C. No details are given, and we do not know whether Parthenius was a combatant or not; but if he was spared for the sake of his talent, he can hardly have been a mere child; he must have already gained some reputation. It may therefore be assumed that he was at least sixteen when he was captured. Thus, if Suidas refers to the final defeat of Mithradates, he was born not later than 82 B.C.³ This date agrees very well with the statement of Macrobius, for Vergil was born in 70 B.C., and presumably Parthenius was some years older. The date given for his death is

¹ Macr., v., 18.

² *Geschichte der Griechischen Litteratur*, Vol. I., p. 191.

³ It is probable that the date of his birth should actually be placed some years earlier; but it is not impossible that he was well-known at the age of sixteen. If Suetonius may be trusted, Lucan had gained a reputation at an even earlier age. See p. 141 below.

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suspicious, for even if he was born as late as 82 B.C., he would have been nearly a hundred years old in A.D. 14; but it is not impossible that he lived to see Tiberius succeed to the imperial power.¹

Parthenius may have written poems before his capture, and must certainly have been writing during the period of the Neoteric School. His association with Gallus and Vergil, however, suggests that he belonged to and influenced their literary circle, and not that of Catullus. But, though in date and circumstances he is associated with the Latin poets, he represents the later Alexandrian tradition. Not only were his works written in Greek, but his sources were mainly Alexandrian, and it is clear that he was a true follower of Euphorion. He thus forms a link between the later Alexandrian poets and the *Cantores Euphorionis*.

The only extant work of Parthenius is his prose collection *περὶ Ἑρωτικῶν Παθημάτων*, but it was not as a prose writer that he was famous. Suidas calls him an elegiac poet, and mentions three of his works, *Aphrodite*, a dirge on Arete and an encomium of Arete, stating, however, that there were many others. Other titles preserved in the fragments are dirges on Archelais and Auxithemis, Bias, Delos, Crinagoras, Leucadiæ, Anthippe, Idolophanes, Heracles, Iphiclus, Metamorphoses, Propempticon. Five of these, *Archelais*, *Bias*, *Delos*, *Crinagoras*, *Leucadiæ*, are proved by the fragments to have been elegiac, and we may reasonably conclude that the *Dirge on Auxithemis* was also an elegy; the metre of the others cannot be determined. The

¹ The statement of Suidas is scarcely possible, if he was captured in 73 B.C.

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fragments which are not assigned to any particular poem are mostly too short to supply any certain evidence, but some of them are clearly elegiac. Two passages only can be certainly ascribed to hexameter poems. The more important of these¹ is quoted by Parthenius himself and narrates the death of Byblis: he does not, however, mention from what poem the lines are taken. The other passage consists of two consecutive hexameters:

*Μάρτυρα δ' ἄμμιν τῆς ἐπὶ Γαδείρῃ λίπεθ' οἶμον,
ἀρχαίου Βριαρεῶος ἀπ' οὐνομα τὸ πρὶν ἀράξας.*

These lines are quoted by the Scholiast on Dionysius Periegetes, but he does not give their source. The subject suggests that they belong to the *Heracles*; we have several quotations from this poem, but none is long enough to show the metre; it may have been written in hexameters, and, if so, was probably an epyllion or hymn. The only other fragment of any length is in elegiac metre.²

Most of the titles do not in themselves suggest works of great interest, and the fragments throw little or no

¹ ἡ δ' ὅτε δὴ ῥ' ὀλοοῖο κασιγνήτου νόον ἔγγω,
κλαῖεν ἀηδονίδων θαμινώτερον, αἶ τ' ἐνὶ βήσσης
Σιθονίῳ κούρῳ περὶ μυρίον αἰάζουσιν
καὶ ῥα κατὰ δτυφελοῖο σαρωνίδος αὐτίκα μίτρην
ἀψαμένη δειρὴν ἐνεθήκατο, ταὶ δ' ἐπ' ἐκείνῃ
βεῦδεα παρθενικαὶ Μιλησίδες ἐρρήξαντο.

Erot. Path., xi.

² παρθένος ἡ Κυλίκων εἶχεν ἀνακτορίην.
ἀγγίγamos δ' ἔπελεν, καθαρῶ δ' ἐπιμαίνετο Κύνῳ
Κύπριδος ἐξ ἀδύτων πυρσὸν ἀναψαμένη.
εἰσόκε μιν Κύπρις πηγὴν θέτο, μῖξε δ' ἔρωτι
Κύνου καὶ νύμφης ὕδατόεντα γάμον.

Stephanus of Byzantium *ap.* Eustath. *ad* Hom. *Il.*, ii. 712.

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light on them. The title, *Metamorphoses*, however, is of importance, and it is most unfortunate that so little is known of this work. It has been suggested on somewhat insufficient evidence that it was an epic or elegiac poem,¹ but actually the only record of it is in prose.

The passage occurs in the Scholia on Dionysius Periegetes, and is as follows: *ὡς Παρθένιος ἐν ταῖς Μεταμορφώσεσι λέγει, ἐπεὶδὴ Μίνως λαβὼν τὰ Μέγαρα διὰ Σκύλλης τῆς Νίσου θυγατρὸς, ἐρασθείσης αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀποτεμούσης τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ πατρὸς τὸν μόρσιμον πλόκαμον καὶ οὕτως αὐτὸν προδοῦσης, ἐννοηθεὶς ὡς ἡ πατέρα προδοῦσα οὐδενὸς ἂν ποτε ῥαδίως φείσαιοτο, προσδήσας αὐτὴν πηδαλίῳ νεὼς ἀφήκεν ἐπισύρεσθαι τῇ θαλάσῃ, ἔστ' εἰς ὄρνειον ἡ κόρη μετεβλήθη.*²

It is of course possible that this is a prose summary of a verse passage, but it is at least equally likely that the Scholiast is quoting the actual words of Parthenius, and that the *Metamorphoses* was a prose work. If so, it was probably a collection of stories like the *Love Romances*, each story containing a transformation. It is even possible that the quoted passage is a complete story. It is scarcely shorter than the story of Pancrato,³ which is the shortest of the *Love Romances*,⁴ and it is decidedly in the manner of Parthenius. In any case the *Metamorphoses* was an important work, since it must be included among the sources of Ovid's poem.

On the whole then the evidence suggests that Parthenius was principally an elegiac poet, but that he occasionally wrote epic verse. There can be no doubt that

¹ Cf. Rohde, *Der Griechische Roman*, pp. 100 ff. A. Croiset, *Histoire de la littérature Grecque*, Tome V., p. 248.

² Schol. Dionys. Perieg., v., 420.

³ *Erot. Path.*, xix.

⁴ The actual narrative of the story of Corythus (*Erot. Path.*, xxxiv.) is still shorter.

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he was a true Alexandrian in spirit, since he is mentioned by Suetonius¹ in conjunction with Euphorion and Rhianus, and by Lucian² with Euphorion and Callimachus. An epigram in the Greek Anthology³ also couples him with Callimachus. We do not gather from any of these writers that he was considered a great poet. The two longer fragments are graceful, but not striking. It is impossible on such slight evidence to estimate his merit.

The main interest attaching to Parthenius, however, lies in his *περὶ Ἑρωτικῶν Παθημάτων*. The importance of this work in illustrating the history of the epyllion is considerable. It is a collection of thirty-six short love-stories, prefaced by a dedicatory letter to Cornelius Gallus. After stating that his design has been merely to give a short summary of each story, Parthenius adds: αὐτῷ τέ σοι παρέσται εἰς ἔπη καὶ ἐλεγείας ἀνάγειν τὰ μάλιστα ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀρμόδια. . . . οἰοῖνε γὰρ ὑπομνηματίων τρόπον αὐτὰ συνελεξάμεθα, καὶ σοι νυνὶ τὴν χρῆσιν ὁμοίαν, ὡς ἔοικε, παρέξεται. This letter shows the great importance of the tales, namely, that they fix the type of subject which was considered most suitable to the epyllion, and to some extent indicate the treatment.

As the title shows, the tales are all love-stories. They

¹ Suet., *Tib.*, 70. The three poets are mentioned as the favourites of Tiberius.

² *Quomodo historia sit conscribenda*. 57. After warning the historian against long-winded descriptions and commending the method of Homer, Lucian adds: καίτοι ποιητῆς ὦν παραθεῖ τὸν Τάνταλον καὶ τὸν Ἰξίονα καὶ τὸν Τιτυὸν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους. εἰ δὲ Παρθένιος ἢ Εὐφορίων ἢ Καλλίμαχος ἔλεγε, πόσοις ἂν οἶε ἔπεισι τὸ ὕδωρ ἄχρι πρὸς τὸ χεῖλος τοῦ Ταντάλου ἦγαγεν; εἴτα πόσοις ἂν Ἰξίονα ἐκύλισε;

³ *Anth. Pal.*, xi. 130.

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vary in length, but none of them are long, and some are very shortly told. The sources are usually given and are very various; epic, elegiac and dramatic poetry, historical and philosophical prose are all represented, and occasionally extracts from the sources are quoted; thus Parthenius throws some light on Greek writers of whom we know little or nothing else.

As a result of the extreme simplicity of their form, the tales show certain well-marked characteristics, which are typical in a greater or less degree of them all. Twenty-five end with the death—usually violent—of one or both of the principal characters. The remaining eleven, though not actually ending in tragedy, are characterised by unfaithfulness on the part of the hero or heroine, or by some incident of violence or treachery. Three only can be said to have happy endings. Certain incidents recur several times; in six cases a girl is forsaken by her lover; murder and accidental death appear frequently, and there are six instances of murder of kinsmen; suicide occurs eight times. In six of the tales the plot turns on unnatural affection, and the same motive occurs incidentally in three more. In five the chief motive is the love of a girl for an enemy, and three of these end with the heroine's betrayal of her father to her lover. It will be seen that violence, treachery and unfaithfulness are constantly recurring themes, and that the tales are highly sensational and frequently likely to appeal to a morbid taste. Though vice is usually punished and virtue rewarded, it cannot be claimed that the moral tone as a whole is high.

Parthenius did not admit any well-known story into

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his collection. There are many famous love-stories of Greek mythology which would fit excellently into a collection of this type; for example, the stories of Philomela, Scylla, Phædra and Sthenobœa all find close parallels in the *Love Romances*. But the tales collected by Parthenius can never have been widely known. This is no doubt partly due to the fact that, if Gallus needed the more famous stories, he knew them already; but it also illustrates the love of the Alexandrians for the by-ways of mythology and literature.

But there is another point of interest in the plots selected: more than half of them have either no connection with mythology at all, or are connected with it only by a very slight link, which has no real bearing on the story.¹ Some of them are attached to the names of historical persons, as Periander and Cyrus; in others the characters are entirely fictitious. Parthenius, of course, did not invent these stories himself, and he usually mentions the author or authors from whom a story is taken. Whether any of them were invented by his authorities we have no means of knowing, but it is clear that we are here dealing with a type of story which may be classed as romantic fiction. Parthenius evidently expected Gallus to break away from the tradition which connected epic poetry with certain definite cycles of legend.

Who was first responsible for this breakage we cannot discover. The extant Greek epyllia are all mythological, although we can trace a growing tendency to choose

¹ Thus the only link in v. is the mention of Bellerophon as the ancestor of Leucippus and in xxvii. of Polybus of Corinth as the father of Alcinoë.

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myths that lend themselves to romantic treatment and to develop the romantic side. This tendency may be noted in the *Hylas* of Theocritus and the *Europa* of Moschus, and is fully developed in the Latin epyllia, though it is only in Ovid that we find instances of romance completely separated from myth. The sources mentioned by Parthenius are too various to be conclusive, but it is noteworthy that comparatively few of them are epic; also the majority of the non-mythological tales, for which the sources are quoted,¹ seem to be drawn from prose authors; only six are attributed solely to poets.² These six are decidedly interesting: v. and xxii are from the elegiac poet Hermesianax, Licymnius of Chios being also quoted as the source of xxii.; xxvii. is from the *'Αραί* of Mæro, which from its title would seem to have been a catalogue; three only are certainly taken from epic sources. Of these three, two, i. and xi., are connected with the city of Caunus and are both referred to Apollonius Rhodius³ and Nicænetus. These two stories cannot be regarded in quite the same light as the others. It is true that they have little or no connection with any well-established myth, but they are probably old traditions of Caunus, and may be considered to stand half-way between myth and fiction. Thus the only story representing pure fiction, which can be certainly traced to an epic source

¹ No sources are given for eleven of the tales.

² The story of Antheus (xiv.) is referred to a prose source, but a passage dealing with it is quoted from an elegiac poem of Alexander Ætolus.

³ Apollonius wrote an epic poem on the founding of Caunus, which is one of the sources of these two stories. Parthenius quotes in xi., a passage from Nicænetus on the story of Byblis.

Euphorion and Parthenius

is xiii., the story of Harpalyce, which is referred to the Thrax of Euphorion.¹ Nine stories of this class are definitely referred to prose sources.

On the other hand the tales which have a clear connection with well-known myths are mainly taken from poets. Three only are given from prose authors without the addition of a poetical source, whereas eight are quoted either from poets or from poets and prose authors in conjunction. Three of these eight are entirely from epic sources.

Now it is clear from these figures that the poets used by Parthenius still regarded myth or long-established tradition as the proper subjects for narrative verse. The prose writers, on the other hand, used freely any stories which suited their purpose. These stories must be very various in origin; some may have been local traditions collected by the authors, others pure invention on the part of the authors or their informants; one or two may be founded on fact. But the evidence seems to show that the Alexandrian poets occasionally adopted this type of story from prose authors, and developed it on their own lines. Possibly Euphorion was the first epic poet who did so, but the evidence is too scanty for any definite pronouncement. Parthenius evidently wished to encourage Gallus to use the type, and may have succeeded in persuading him; but it does not seem to have become popular, as Ovid is the only Latin poet who adopts it, and even he prefers mythological subjects.

Parthenius gives us very little clue to the treatment of these subjects in epyllion; he confesses that he is only

¹ An unknown writer, Deftadas, is also mentioned as an authority.

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concerned with the briefest possible outline. It would seem that he admired learned discussions, for more than once he gives a second version of a story or adds extra details from other authorities. This may indicate that such discussions as that which disfigures the opening of the *Ciris* were not uncommon.

The plots are sometimes simple, sometimes involved, but all lend themselves to narrative and dramatic style. There is no indication of picturesque treatment or realistic detail, but no conclusion can be drawn from this fact, as Parthenius would naturally leave the treatment to Gallus. The most that can be said is that, since the tales are intended for short poems and are for the most part full of incident, there would not be much opportunity for detailed description. On the other hand there are indications of the introduction of long speeches such as are found in the *Ciris* and frequently in the *Metamorphoses*. In the story of Polymela,¹ Æolus reviles Odysseus after his departure; Evopis in the story of Dimoetes,² before hanging herself, curses Dimoetes; Nicandra in the story of Alcinoë³ makes many prayers to Athene. Where there is no actual indication of a speech, the introduction of a nurse,⁴ tutor⁵ or other confidant⁶ reminds the reader of similar scenes accompanied by long speeches in the *Ciris* or *Metamorphoses*.

It may also be safely assumed that elaborate psychological analysis was expected. An occasional touch in Parthenius suggests at once how Gallus might have handled

¹ *Erot. Path.*, ii.

³ *Erot. Path.*, xxvii.

⁵ *Erot. Path.*, vi.

² *Erot. Path.*, xxxi.

⁴ *Erot. Path.*, xiii., xxi.

⁶ *Erot. Path.*, v., xvi.

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the tale, sometimes putting the analysis into the mouth of the hero or heroine, sometimes analysing a state of mind in his own person. A conflict between duty and passion occurs in many of the tales, and this subject is treated repeatedly and in great detail by Ovid.¹

The epyllion as conceived by Parthenius may then be summed up as follows: it was a short narrative poem, in which the interest centred on the plot and characters, no prominence being given to picturesque or realistic description. The plot was well defined, often abounding in incident, nearly always sensational, occasionally morbid and usually concluding in tragedy; a happy ending might be allowed, if sufficient sensation was introduced into the course of the story. Love-stories were the most popular type of subject, and much psychological analysis was introduced, often, probably, by means of dramatic treatment.

Parthenius is the third of the Greek poets through whom the history of the narrative epyllion can be traced. But these three poets can only be looked on as landmarks in the course of that history.² We know more or less what the *Hecale* of Callimachus was like, and, in the absence of any knowledge of an earlier poem of the same type, we must regard it as a starting-point. The little that is known of Euphorion suggests that by his time the type had developed into a still more definitely narrative form; the great reputation of Euphorion makes it legitimate to conjecture that he

¹ The story of Byblis (Parth., xi.) is actually told in great detail by Ovid. (*Met.*, ix., 450-665). Ovid's story has all the characteristics of the type represented by Parthenius.

² See Note II. Lost Greek Epyllia.

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was himself largely responsible for the development. Finally Parthenius appears with a fixed type of narrative, of which we have many examples in the Latin poets. Parthenius certainly did not invent the type, but it is probable that he did much to popularise it and fix it as a model for his school.

VI CATULLUS AND HIS SCHOOL

I

THE group of poets, to whom Cicero refers somewhat contemptuously as the *Neoteroi*, seems to stand a little apart from the main course of epyllion development. It is difficult to judge of the tendencies of this school as a whole, since it is now represented only by the *Peleus and Thetis* of Catullus. But in this poem at any rate there is no trace of the influence of Euphorion, and the tradition is rather that of Theocritus and Moschus than that of Callimachus; and though the title of Cinna's epyllion, the *Zmyrna*, suggests the later Greek type, it is clear that there was a marked tendency at least in some part of this school to return to the idyllic treatment.

Catullus has left us only two examples of hexameter poems, the sixty-second poem, which is a marriage hymn sung by a choir of youths and maidens, and the sixty-fourth, which tells the story of the marriage feast of Peleus and Thetis. The marriage hymn has no epic characteristics except metre, but the *Peleus and Thetis* is a genuine epyllion related both to the idyllic and narrative types. It is the earliest of the extant Latin epyllia. There is no introduction or dedication; like Moschus in the *Europa*, Catullus enters at once upon his story. The opening passage tells briefly of the sailing of the

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Argo, giving details which recall the opening lines of the *Medea* of Euripides. A vividly pictorial passage follows in which the curiosity of the sea-nymphs and the consequent meeting of Peleus and Thetis are told; Then follows a short salutation to the heroes, and the narrative passes immediately to the palace of Peleus and the preparations for the wedding. The description of the bridal couch leads to a long digression; its coverlet is embroidered with the story of Ariadne. She is represented as standing on the shore of Naxos watching the departure of Theseus, and the story of her love and desertion is told. This is followed by her lament, and the story is concluded by the return of Theseus, his neglect of his father's command and the consequent death of Ægeus. Finally another embroidered picture shows the coming of Bacchus and his train.

The main subject is now resumed. The wedding guests depart and immediately the gods arrive, the lesser first, the greater following them; only Apollo and Diana are absent. The tables are spread for the feast and the Fates sing the marriage hymn prophesying the siege of Troy and the glory of Achilles. The poem concludes with a reflection on the glories of the heroic age, when the gods visited mortals, and the vices of Catullus' own time.

It is unnecessary here to consider the sources of the stories in detail. The subjects are common both in literature and art and deal with the lives of well-known heroes. A summary of the main sources is given by Robinson Ellis¹ in his introductory note on the poem.

¹ *A Commentary on Catullus*. Clarendon Press. 1889.

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The question is discussed in more detail by A. P. Lemercier,¹ who refutes the old theory that the *Peleus and Thetis* is a translation from Callimachus or another, and by Georges Lafaye,² who gives an exhaustive analysis of the poem. From Homer onwards the marriage of Peleus and Thetis was a common theme; to mention only the principal instances, Pindar has several references to it,³ and Euripides in the *Iphigeneia in Aulis*⁴ has a chorus describing the marriage feast. The story of Ariadne was the subject of a lost play of Euripides, the *Theseus*. Apollonius has references to both stories.⁵ Unfortunately we have no means of knowing whether either subject had been treated earlier in epyllion.

Four incidents can be traced to no known source: the first meeting of Peleus and Thetis and their mutual love⁶; the absence of Apollo and Diana from the feast;⁷ the singing of the prophetic marriage song by the Fates;⁸ and the connection of Ariadne's curse with the death of Ægeus.⁹ Peleus is usually a passive agent in the hands of Zeus; Thetis is always either passive or unwilling.¹⁰ Homer and Æschylus ascribe the song to

¹ *Etude sur les Sources du Poème LXIV. de Catulle*. Cæn, 1893.

² *Catulle et ses Modèles*. Paris. 1894.

³ Pind., *Isthm.*, v., 35 ff; vii., 59 ff; *Pyth.*, iii., 152 ff; *Nem.*, iii., 55 ff; iv., 100 ff; v., 46 ff.

⁴ Eur., *Iph. Aul.*, 1036-1079. Cf. 701-709.

⁵ Ap., *Rh.*, *Arg.*, iv., 790 ff; iii., 998 ff.

⁶ Lafaye, p. 162.

⁷ Lemercier, p. 31. Lafaye, p. 168.

⁸ Lemercier, p. 41. Lafaye, p. 169.

⁹ Lafaye, p. 175.

¹⁰ The story was told, probably at some length, in the *Cypria*. The marriage of Thetis to a mortal was her punishment for rejecting Zeus. Cf. *Cypria*, fr. 4 and 5. (*Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns*. Loeb Classical Library.)

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Apollo and the Muses and the prophecy to Cheiron. In making the death of Ægeus the direct result of Ariadne's curse, Catullus may have been following Euripides. Lafaye¹ points out that the general tradition tended to excuse or even approve the desertion of Ariadne, ascribing it to the will of the gods. The treatment of it by Catullus is exactly in the manner of Euripides, and it seems probable that the whole incident owes much to the *Theseus*. Apart from the direct sources of the stories, the poem is full of reminiscences and imitations, to which Catullus, like Vergil, could give new force and beauty. Owing to the length of the Ariadne episode the *Peleus and Thetis* has been much criticised for want of proportion. It has indeed been suggested that Catullus intended to write an epic on Achilles and that this is a fragment of it. But the episode would be out of place in grand epic. The subject is entirely irrelevant to the main action and the treatment of it is too dramatic. Homer and Apollonius both give long accounts of works of art,² but the treatment is purely descriptive. On the other hand, such a digression is characteristic of epyllion, and is not in any way disproportionate.

There is, nevertheless, a real disproportion not between the main subject and the digression, but between the two pictures, that of the deserted Ariadne (199 lines) and that of the arrival of Bacchus (14 lines). The parallel between the union of Bacchus and Ariadne, god and mortal, and that of Peleus and Thetis, mortal and goddess, can hardly be accidental; yet the second

¹ Lafaye, pp. 172-175. He suggests that Catullus himself is responsible for the new treatment.

² *Il.*, xviii., 483-608. *Arg.*, i., 730-767.

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picture, which seems to contain the point of the digression, is almost obscured by the disproportionate description of the first. This disproportion appears to be closely connected with the question of date and construction, and must be considered in relation to it.

There is no direct evidence of the date. No reference is made to any contemporary event, and comparison with the other work of Catullus suggests no conclusion. The suggestion that the indictment of modern vices is due to bitterness occasioned by the rupture with Lesbia¹ admits of no proof; the sentiment expressed is a commonplace of poets from Hesiod onwards.

The sole indication of date so far discovered, which has any actual evidence to support it, consists in the resemblance of certain passages in the *Peleus and Thetis* to parallel passages in Lucretius. The lines in question are cited by Munro² in his note on Lucretius iii., 57. He points out that, in Catullus, the majority occur in the Ariadne incident, whereas, in Lucretius, the passages are found in all parts of the poem: Catullus therefore is the imitator, and, as the *de Rerum Natura* was not published until after the death of Lucretius in 55 B.C. and Catullus almost certainly died in 54 B.C., the Ariadne episode at least must be placed among his latest works.

¹ Westphal, cited by Ellis. The theory has been worked out in great detail by L. L. Sell. (*De Catulli Carmine sexagesimo quarto Quaestiones Diversae*. New York. 1918.) He argues that Catullus tells his own love-story in the person of Ariadne, basing the argument mainly on the many likenesses between the Lesbia poems and the Ariadne episode. But the only *faits* which can be proved by these likenesses are that Catullus, like many other poets, constantly echoes himself, and that he was able to picture very forcibly the sentiments of deceived lovers.

² Munro., *Lucretius*, Vol. II., p. 179. See also Introduction to Vol. II., p. 19.

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Some of the passages cited show resemblances which may be merely accidental, but, when these have been sifted out, there still remain a number of instances where the likeness can hardly be due to chance.

It is not, however, necessary to suppose that the whole poem was written after the appearance of the *de Rerum Natura*. The fact that the imitations of Lucretius occur mainly in one section alone suggests that the poem was revised rather than composed at that date. Moreover, if it was entirely written after the death of Lucretius, its period of composition was comparatively short. We have no record of Catullus' speed of composition, but it may be presumed that in his epic he followed the example of Cinna, who spent nine years on the *Zmyrna*;¹ certainly the finish of detail in the *Peleus and Thetis* suggests long elaboration; and Catullus himself commends Cinna and contrasts him with the rapid composers of long epics.² The composition of the *Peleus and Thetis* probably occupied some years; at first the influences seem to have been solely Greek, either deriving from Greek originals or from the Latin imitators of the Alexandrians; but, before it was published, Catullus read Lucretius, and the epyllion underwent modifications which show the influence of the Latin master.

We may perhaps go a little further than this. There is some probability that the whole passage 124-250 was added at a later date, when the rest of the poem was practically complete. There are several points of evidence which support this theory.

The imitations of Lucretius are found mainly, though

¹ Cat., xciv. Quint., *Inst. Orat.*, x., 4, 4.

² Cat., xciv.

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not entirely, within the limits of this passage, and lines with spondaic endings, which occur frequently in other parts of the poem, are here entirely absent. Catullus, like other *Neoterici*, followed the fashion of using spondaic endings; Lucretius on the other hand uses them rarely. This point is not conclusive, as the last hundred lines of the *Peleus and Thetis* contain only one spondaic ending,¹ but it is noteworthy that this section, which is immediately preceded and followed by passages where the spondaic ending is very frequent, agrees in this respect with the use of Lucretius.

Again the proportion of lines in which the dactyls exceed the spondees in number is 3.3 per cent. higher in this section than in the rest of the poem; Lucretius uses such lines far more freely than Catullus or Cicero. The numbers here, however, are too small for any certain conclusion.

Further there is a marked change of style in this section. In the main theme and in the earlier part of the digression the interest lies in picturesque descriptions rather than in the narrative.² Here the form is narrative and dramatic and the chief interest lies in the character of the heroine. It is possible that Cinna's *Zmyrna* has here influenced Catullus. The long lament is characteristic of the narrative epyllion, whereas Catullus, except in this passage, conforms to the idyllic type.

Finally the poem is complete without this section. In 50-115 we have a detailed description of the picture of Ariadne watching the ship of Theseus with a short

¹ 358.

² The song of the Fates is not really dramatic in character. It may be compared with the incidental songs in Theocritus.

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digression on the love of Ariadne and the slaying of the Minotaur. In the following lines Catullus apologises for the digression and summarises the rest of the story:

“Sed quid ego a primo digressus carmine plura
Commemo rem ut linquens genitoris filia vultum,
Ut consanguineæ complexum, ut denique matris,
Quæ misera in gnata deperdita lamentata est,
Omnibus his Thesei dulcem præoptarit amorem,
Aut ut vecta ratis spumosa ad litora Diæ
Venerit, aut ut eam devinctam lumina somno
Liquerit immemori discedens pectore coniunx.”¹

These lines would be most appropriately followed by the second picture with its opening sentence:

“At parte ex alia florens volitabat Iacchus
Cum thiaso Satyrorum et Nysigenis Silenis
Te quærens, Ariadna, tuoque incensus amore.”²

The picture of the deserted Ariadne is forcibly contrasted with that of the happy fate in store for her, and the disproportion already noticed between the two pictures no longer exists. The first is the more minutely described, but the length of the description is not great enough to obscure the second.

None of these points is conclusive in itself. But, taken together, they suggest most strongly that the whole passage was inserted after the publication of the *de Rerum Natura*. No doubt other changes were made at the same time; for example, lines 261-264 with their obvious reminiscences of Lucretius³ must belong to the same period.

We have then, in the *Peleus and Thetis*, a poem which probably was in process of composition for some years, and which contains some of Catullus' latest work. Like

¹ 116-123.

² 251-253.

³ Cf. Lucr., ii., 618-619; 636. iv., 546.

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other epyllia it falls into two distinct parts, a main subject and a digression; the digression, owing, perhaps, to the insertion of later work, itself contains a digression of some length.

The main subject is entirely idyllic in character and is presented in a series of pictures. There is no interest of character or plot; the various incidents succeed one another in chronological order and the necessary links of narrative are given as briefly as possible. Every device and point of form can be more or less closely paralleled from one or other of the extant Greek epyllia or idylls. The brief introduction relating the meeting of Peleus and Thetis during the voyage to Colchis is like that of the *Hylas*¹ where the love of Heracles and the voyage of the Argonauts serve as a setting for the main incident. The address to the heroes matches the address to Castor and Polydeuces in the twenty-second Idyll of Theocritus.² The introduction of a work of art and a resulting digression describing the pictures on it is found in the *Europa* of Moschus.³ The song of the Fates may be compared with the Adonis song introduced into the fifteenth Idyll of Theocritus⁴ and with the *Epithalamium of Menelaus and Helen*.⁵ The conclusion, contrasting heroic with modern times, has no exact parallel in Greek, but a similar application is found in the much shorter reflection at the opening of the *Hylas* that love is a universal force affecting alike the heroes and ourselves.

¹ Theoc., xiii., 1-24.

² Theoc., xxii., 23-26. Cf. 214-215.

³ Mosch., ii., 43-62. The ultimate source is of course *Il.*, xviii., 483-608.

⁴ Theoc., xv., 100-144.

⁵ Theoc., xviii., 9-58.

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The digression, even allowing for considerable alteration and extension of its original form, must always have been contrasted with the main subject. This contrast is one of style rather than subject. The main subject has no plot and lends itself to description; the chief interest is in the pictures. In the digression the idyllic style is at first maintained, but there is interest of character and plot as well. While the reader delights in the picture of the deserted Ariadne, he is interested in her story. As the episode is developed, the story becomes all important and the epyllion passes from the idyllic to the narrative form.

A short summary will show how the complexity of construction increases in this part of the poem. The opening lines describe the forsaken Ariadne in such a fashion as to suggest that Catullus was actually describing a representation of the subject in art. A short narrative tells of the voyage of Theseus to Crete. Then comes a picture of Ariadne in her father's house and her sudden passion for Theseus, who slays the Minotaur by her help. Here Catullus, apologising for the digression, sums up her flight and the voyage to Naxos in a few lines.

It has already been shown that this is the obvious and natural end of the episode, and that what follows is really another digression. Catullus now completely deserts the idyllic style. Ariadne laments her flight and denounces the perfidy of Theseus, ending with a prayer for his punishment. The speech which occupies seventy lines differs in no important particular from other speeches of the same kind. It seems to have served as a model to the later Latin poets, and is itself based on

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the speeches of Medea in Euripides and Apollonius;¹ the likeness to the speech in Apollonius is particularly marked. The curse brings us back to Theseus and his neglect of his father's command. Catullus again returns to an earlier period of the story, and by means of a speech tells how Ægeus had ordered the black sails to be exchanged for white ones. Finally the death of Ægeus and the sorrowful return of Theseus are related. The fulfilment of the curse naturally brings about a return to Ariadne, and the digression closes with the coming of Bacchus; in this the idyllic style is once more adopted.

The relation of the digression to the main subject has been much discussed. It has been variously maintained that the two have no connection, that the connection is a contrast between fortunate and unfortunate love, and that the glory of marriage is the subject of both. In all the extant epyllia, which contain digressions, there is some connection of idea whether established by likeness or contrast.² Both elements seem to be present here; the real connection is the union of human and divine; but the even course of the love of Thetis is contrasted with the suffering of Ariadne.

The whole poem is Alexandrian in character. The subjects are chosen as lending themselves to idyllic treatment and supplying the love motive which was by this time so popular as to be almost essential; the digression provides for the introduction of unhappy love and a

¹ Eur. *Med.*, 465-519. Ap. Rh., *Arg.*, iv., 355-390.

² The digression in the *Hecale* appears to have no connection with the main subject, but owing to the condition of the fragments the point is uncertain. Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* does not always observe the convention.

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deserted heroine, but the happy ending saves the poem from tragedy and restores the general lightness of tone. The construction, with all its appearance of spontaneity, is elaborate and careful. This is particularly noticeable in the digression where the whole story of the connection of Athens with Crete is told with perfect clearness in spite of the neglect of chronological order. Catullus shows great skill in beginning almost at the end and working in all the previous incidents without losing the thread of the story.

The worst faults of the Alexandrians are almost entirely avoided. Learned and literary allusions are present, but they are neither obscure nor obtrusive. There is no straining after effect and no morbid emotion. Only in one point has Catullus been influenced by the tendency to introduce ugly and unnatural details; he twice refers to the Minotaur as Ariadne's brother,¹ thus recalling the monstrous story of Pasiphae. But this is the only instance of the kind in the poem.

The style of the *Peleus and Thetis* as a whole is light and graceful.² Though the characters are gods and heroes there is no solemnity in the tone. Catullus indeed deliberately avoids any incident or character which might introduce too solemn a note. Thus he describes the lesser gods in detail, but the greater gods are only men-

¹ 150, 181.

² Couat (*Etude sur Catulle*, Paris, 1875., p. 225) censures Catullus for not suiting his style to his subject. "Il y a multiplié les tableaux et les lieux communs, à la façon Alexandrine, mais il n'a pas su, mieux que les Alexandrins, éviter dans ces scènes grandes ou tragiques, l'affectation, le joli, le détail inutile, le mot cherché." He objects also to the use of diminutives. This argues a complete misunderstanding of the epyllion form. Catullus was not trying to write grand epic, and deliberately chose a lighter and more familiar style.

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tioned as being present; and in the picture of the Fates we are less impressed with their mysterious powers than with the realistic description of their spinning. Yet, while he avoids undue solemnity, he does not adopt the other extreme of treating the gods in a purely humorous spirit as Callimachus often does. Again there is no real tragedy. Even in the depths of her despair Ariadne is only half tragic. At first she is, frankly, no more than a pretty picture—a fairy-tale princess whose troubles only serve to delay the happy ending. Even in her speech she does not live as Dido lives, or even as Scylla in the *Ciris*. The speech is too carefully constructed and too closely copied from familiar models, nor has Catullus the power of transferring such passages from Greek to Latin poetry and reanimating them with new passion. In lyric poetry he is supreme; it remained for Vergil to recreate the epic.

To admit this is not to belittle the genius of Catullus; his is not an epic genius, and he did not attempt to write serious epic. The *Peleus and Thetis* has suffered considerably in the past from the attitude of critics who judged it from the epic standpoint. But once the true nature of the poem is perceived, it becomes obvious that the style is entirely suited to the form. Catullus uses every device to retain the spirit of the epic idyll: it must be picturesque; it must be light, it must be graceful; above all it must not be too human.

The greatest charm of the poem lies in the pictures, which are extraordinarily beautiful and vivid. The nymphs rising out of the sea breast-high in the foam of the oars; the long vista of the palace glittering with

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gold, silver and ivory; Ariadne on the shore with her garments floating at her feet; Ariadne in her father's house like a spring flower; the companions of Bacchus; the guests departing like waves stirred by a breeze at sunrise; Peneus planting forest trees before the palace; the Fates with their distaffs and spindles: all these are shown with the perfection and accuracy of detail which is the glory of the best work of the Alexandrians. Yet they are entirely individual; no one but Catullus could have produced them; they are marked by the indefinable quality which appears in all his best work.

To analyse this quality is of course impossible. Exactly what constitutes the greatness of great poetry is an insoluble problem. One characteristic point, however, is perhaps worthy of mention. It is most apparent that Catullus visualised his scenes very closely and in terms of colour. Sometimes touches of colour are included in the description, sometimes the colouring is suggested without actual words. He is particularly fond of scenes in which white is contrasted with a brilliant colour. The opening lines give us the deep blue of the sea flecked with dazzling foam as the rowers strike it.¹ The palace shines with silver and gold and is white with ivory; the marriage couch is of ivory and is spread with purple.² Ariadne pictures herself washing the white feet of Theseus and spreading purple coverings

¹ "Cærule verrentes abiegnis æquora palmis.

Quæ simul ac rostro ventosum præscidit æquor,
Tortaque remigio spumis incanduit unda,
Emersere feri *candenti* e gurgite vultus,
Æquoreæ monstrum Nereides admirantes." 7, 13-15.

² 43-49.

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on his bed.¹ The Fates wear white robes with a purple border.² A similar contrast is implied in the description of Ariadne on the shore, where the mention of her golden hair calls up the picture of her white limbs as her robe slips away.³ It is not only in the colour, however, that this power of visualising is shown; every detail of the picture is given with absolute accuracy,⁴ and here, as always, Catullus has the gift of seizing the essential point and using the right word.

But with all its beauties the *Peleus and Thetis* is not an entire success; it does not give the reader a sense of unity. It never conveys, as does, for instance, the *Hylas* of Theocritus, the conviction that here is a work of art perfect of its kind. Yet the perfection is present in almost any part, if it be studied separately; it is only lacking in the whole.

The cause of the failure does not lie in the disproportion of the parts, as has so often been maintained. It lies rather in the fact that Catullus did not realise the limitations of the form he was using. This will be clearly shown by comparison with the *Europa* of Moschus, which among the Greek epyllia most nearly resembles the *Peleus and Thetis*. Like Catullus, Moschus has a main subject and a digression. The style of the

¹ 162-163.

² "His corpus tremulum complectens undique vestis

Candida purpurea talos incinxerat ora,

At roseo niveæ residebant vertice vittæ." 307-309.

In spite of the difficulty of interpretation it is clear that the same contrast of colour appears in 309.

³ 63-67.

⁴ The spinning scene is a notable example. The passage, which at first seems obscure, is perfectly clear to anyone who has used a spindle; every detail of the process is given.

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whole is idyllic, but there is a succession of pictures, not a single scene. The digression is introduced by means of a work of art, and is connected with the main theme by likeness of subject. As a whole it is a perfect example of the idyllic form.

Catullus, while adopting the general style and structure has introduced important variations; but his most striking innovation is the extension of the form. The *Europa* contains one hundred and sixty-six lines, the *Peleus and Thetis* four hundred and ten. This alone accounts for its partial failure. The purely idyllic style is only suitable for a short poem. It must have one main picture, and if there are others they must stand as accessories. To dilate on the main picture at great length would be wearisome, and Catullus has avoided that fault; but the other alternative of giving a series of pictures all of equal importance destroys the unity. The *Peleus and Thetis* reads like a series of detached poems loosely strung together.

Again Moschus makes his narrative the main subject, reserving a purely descriptive style for the digression. The effect is perfectly natural, as he uses the artifice of describing a work of art and keeps the fact before the reader by mentioning the materials. This is the method of Homer, Apollonius and Vergil, who never lose sight of the fact that they are describing pictures not life. But Catullus makes his main subject purely descriptive, and in his digression turns to narrative. Moreover, he loses sight of the picture and adopts a dramatic form; this destroys the reader's illusion.

The epic idyll must be short. It is, at best, a curiously artificial form and any extensive modification of it

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destroys its charm. This accounts for the growing tendency to turn to the narrative form. Callimachus seems to have achieved a satisfactory compromise in the *Hecale*, but his successors inclined more and more to lose the idyllic elements. Catullus, distinguished always by a purer taste than his contemporaries, turned to Theocritus rather than to Euphorion for models; but brevity is essential to the epic idyll, and it was not possible to reproduce the perfection of Theocritus in an extended form. The beauty of the *Peleus and Thetis* is due to the genius of the poet; in the hands of anyone but a supreme artist it would have been intolerably tedious. It was left to Vergil among the Latin poets to combine the idyllic and narrative types and to produce in the *Aristæus* an epyllion which, in spite of its long and totally irrelevant digression, is perfectly harmonious throughout.

II

We can do little more than conjecture the character of the lost epyllia of this period. We may safely assume that while the fashion lasted, many were produced; it seems clear that most of them were without merit of any kind, since even their names have disappeared. Four names only have come down to us: the *Alcyone* of Cicero, the *Io* of Calvus, the *Zmyrna* of Cinna and the *Glaucus* of Cornificius. The fragments are inconsiderable, ranging from half a line of the *Glaucus* to six lines of the *Io*.

At first sight it appears impossible even to guess the character of these epyllia; but an examination of the very slender evidence reveals certain points of interest.

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It must be understood, however, that any theories so formed must be purely conjectural.

We may first note that all these subjects have been very fully treated by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*.¹ He seems, indeed, to have been considerably indebted to the Latin epyllia. He has retold either fully or in part all the known epyllia except the *Culex*, which is obviously unsuitable.² Moreover, he has used most of the subjects given in Vergil's sixth Eclogue,³ which certainly represent epyllion subjects, and may be summaries of the epyllia of Gallus.⁴

Where it is possible to compare Ovid's version of any story with the version of an earlier poet, we find that his custom is invariably the same. He accepts the main lines of the earlier version, but varies the details; he omits or shortens incidents previously told at length and elaborates those which had only been indicated. Occasionally he invents new ones, but these do not conflict with the substance of the story. For example, in his account of Orpheus, the second loss of Eurydice, which is the central point of Vergil's version, occupies seven lines only, but the death of Orpheus, which Vergil tells briefly, is considerably elaborated. In his *Scylla* the story is substantially the same as that of the *Ciris*, but different aspects are treated; the only real

¹ *Alcyone: Met.*, xi., 410-748. *Io: Met.*, i., 583-747. *Myrrha: Met.*, x., 298-502. *Glaucus: Met.*, xiii., 904-xiv., 74.

² *Peleus and Thetis: Met.*, xi., 221-265. *Ariadne: Met.*, viii., 152-182. *Cf. Her.*, x. *Scylla: Met.*, viii., 1-151. *Orpheus: Met.*, x., 1-85 and xi., 1-84.

³ *The Creation, the Flood, Deucalion: Met.*, i., 5-415. *Atalanta: Met.*, x., 560-707. *The sisters of Phaethon: Met.*, ii., 340-366. *Scylla: Met.*, viii., 1-151. *Philomela and Procne: Met.*, vi., 412-674. *Hyacinthus: Met.*, x., 162-219.

⁴ Skutsch. *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*. Vol. I., C. II.

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alteration is an unimportant one, consisting in the adoption of the version given by Parthenius that Scylla threw herself into the sea to follow the fleet of Minos. Again, where his source is the *Æneid*, he is most careful to include no incident which is inconsistent with Vergil's narrative.¹

It may fairly be assumed, then, that Ovid gives us to some extent a picture of the lost epyllia; and that we have in his work substantially the same stories, but with considerable variation of treatment and detail. Thus, by considering these four sections of the *Metamorphoses* and their possible relation to the earlier poems, we may throw some light on those poems themselves. Cicero's *Alcyone* was certainly a hexameter poem and probably an epyllion. Two consecutive lines survive² referring to Ceyx as the son of the morning-star. It was probably a work of no particular merit; Cicero does not rank as a great poet, and the *Alcyone* would doubtless have been completely forgotten but for its association with a famous name. It is likely that Ovid used it to some extent, but we can hardly suppose that one of the most beautiful episodes in the *Metamorphoses* owes very much to it. Cicero's contempt for Euphorion suggests that it was of the idyllic type, possibly Theocritean.

¹ So also in *Heroides* X., Ariadne's lament is so full of reminiscences of Catullus, that it gives the impression of the same version elaborated rather than a new version.

² "Hunc genuit clam . . . dis delapsus ab astris
Præius Auroræ solis noctisque satelles."

Non., 65, 8.

Cf. *Met.*, xi., 295-296.

"Illo genitore creatus
Qui vocat Auroram."

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The *Glaucus* of Cornificius affords no evidence whatever. Half a line is quoted by Macrobius,¹ but, except for the fact that it is a hexameter, it is of no significance. Ovid's story of Glaucus is really a digression on the story of the Italian Scylla, which itself is a digression on the voyage of Æneas; the whole episode includes stories of Scylla, Galatea, Glaucus and Circe. How much of this material was used by Cornificius we cannot conjecture. The transformation of Glaucus must have been the main subject; possibly one of the stories connected with it by Ovid was used as a digression. The story of Glaucus appears to be a folk-tale and would make a pretty idyll.²

For the *Io* of Calvus there is more evidence; six single lines survive, and one of these proves deliberate imitation on Ovid's part. Servius³ quotes a line addressed to the transformed *Io* :

"A virgo infelix, herbis pascereis amaris."

Ovid in describing the sufferings of *Io* watched by Argus has the lines:

"Frondibus arboreis et amara pascitur herba,
Proque toro terræ non semper gramen habenti
Incubat infelix, limosaque flumina potat."⁴

Apart from this direct evidence it may be observed that the incident of *Io* is one of the few epyllia in the

¹ "Centaurus fœdare bimembres."

Macr., vi., 5, 13.

² The name of Glaucus is borne by more than one character in legend, but it is probable that the Glaucus of Cornificius was the sea-god. The story is very suitable for an epic idyll. It appears to have been the subject of an epyllion by Alexander Ætolus. (Cf. *Collestanea Alexandrina*, p. 121.)

³ Serv., ad. Verg. *Ecl.*, vi., 47.

⁴ *Met.*, i., 632-634.

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Metamorphoses which closely follows the conventional lines in every respect. It has a main plot, which is interrupted by a digression on a kindred subject—the story of Syrinx and Pan; the digression is shorter than the main plot and subordinate to it, taking the form of a narrative by one of the characters; the main subject is then resumed and the story concluded without further digression. This is not Ovid's most usual practice; he either writes his epyllion without a digression at all, or the main incident is complicated by several digressions which are frequently so elaborate that they may be considered as separate epyllia. The *Io*, however, gives us a conventional epyllion of the type of the *Europa* of Moschus—a poem which is related to it in subject as well as in form. It would appear that Ovid was deliberately using this form, and it is, at least, a probable conclusion that his model was Calvus.

We may safely assume that the *Io* of Calvus was a serious poem; but Ovid's *Io* can only be read as the lightest of comedy. The poetical treatment of the consequences of a totally irrational situation is almost Gilbertian in spirit. Juppiter pleads that he is no common god; Juno argues from experience that, because she cannot see her husband, he is in mischief. Juppiter's dilemma, when asked by Juno for the cow, and Io's sufferings under the herdsman Argus are conceived with a flippancy which recalls kindred passages in the *Hymns* of Callimachus; the lament of Inachus over the awkward situation, Juppiter's promise of reform and Io's second transformation are of the same nature. The digression, too, though pretty in itself, is in keeping with the whole; it begins as a tale told by

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Mercury to Argus; but Argus falls asleep in the middle, so that Ovid continues the story in his own person, explaining that Mercury would have said this if he had finished. In fact the whole story reads like a brilliant parody of the conventional epyllion, satirising the defects of the form in general, and probably Calvus' use of it in particular.

If this theory be accepted, we may perhaps make some conjecture with regard to the *Io* of Calvus. It has already been suggested that it was to some extent idyllic in character; the close association of Calvus with Catullus and the strong idyllic element in the *Peleus and Thetis* support this view. We have no reason to suppose that it was a poem of great merit; it never seems, for example, to have enjoyed the fame of the *Zmyrna*. On the other hand, if Ovid was really parodying it, it must have exemplified the characteristics and defects of the epyllion in a marked manner.

It is fairly safe to assume that the *Io* had a digression, and we may conclude that it was not the story of Syrinx, for it would be unlike Ovid to follow an earlier poet so closely. Where even the existence of a digression cannot be proved, it is dangerous to theorise on the subject of it. But there is some slight evidence that a digression did exist, and that Callisto was the subject. Three points may be noted in support of this theory.

The story of Callisto is a good parallel to the story of *Io*, and a parallel love-story serves as a digression in several instances.¹ The parallel in itself proves nothing, as there are many stories in which a mortal woman

¹ Cf. Europa and Io in Moschus, Io and Syrinx in the *Metamorphoses*, Scylla and Britomartis in the *Ciris*.

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suffers through the love of a god, and any one of them would have been suitable; but the subject is at any rate a likely one.

There are two anonymous epic fragments dealing with Callisto and presumably belonging to the same poem. One is quoted by Hyginus:¹ "Tethys enim Oceani uxor, nutrix Iunonis, prohibet eam in oceanum occidere. De qua in †Creticis versibus:

"Tuque Lycaonio prognata e semine nympe,
Quam gelido raptam de vertice Nonacrinæ
Oceano prohibet semper se tingere Tethys,
Ausa suæ quia sit quondam succumbere alumnae."

Creticis is not clear and is generally believed to be corrupt; various emendations have been suggested; possibly *epicis* might be read.² The address to the heroine is characteristic of epyllion style, and may be compared with the line of Calvus already quoted:

"A virgo infelix, herbis pascere amaris."

The other fragment is quoted by Lactantius:³

"Sed lucet in astris
Callisto renovatque suos sine fluctibus ignes."

If these fragments belong to the *Io*, the first is the opening of the digression, the second its conclusion. *Tuque* suggests that Callisto is one of a series; a list of maidens loved by Jupiter with a detailed account of one of them could easily be introduced into the story of *Io*.

Ovid has certainly made use of the poem in which

¹ Hyg., *Fab.*, 177.

² Bærhens (*Miscellanea Critica*, pp. 19-20) suggests that some unknown poet wrote a *Cretica* and that *versibus* is an interpolation. He considers that the lines cited by Lactantius are from the same poem and that it is the work of one of the *Cantores Euphorionis*.

³ Lact., *Narr. Fab.*, ii., 6.

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these lines occur. In his account of Callisto he makes Juno visit Tethys and Oceanus and pray for vengeance.

"At vos si læsæ contemptus tangit *alumnæ*,
Gurgite cæruleo septem *prohibete* Triones,
Sideraque in cælo stupri mercede recepta
Pellite, ne puro *tinguatur* in æquore pelex."¹

These lines establish a definite connection between Ovid's *Callisto* and the lost poem; this connection is confirmed, and a further connection established with his *Io*, by his double borrowing of the spondaic ending *Nonacrina*, in the *Callisto*:

"Dum redit itque frequens, in virgine Nonacrina
Hæsit."²

and in the *Io*:

"Inter hamadryadas celeberrima Nonacrinas
Naïas una fuit."³

It may be purely accidental, but there is some ground for supposing that Ovid had the same poem in mind in writing both the *Io* and the *Callisto*, and that this poem was the *Io* of Calvus.

We may also remark that the comic touches already noted in the *Io* are also present in the *Callisto*; they are particularly noticeable at the point where Jupiter decides that Callisto is worth a scolding from Juno,⁴ and again where Callisto as a bear needlessly fears the other beasts:

"Sæpe feris latuit visis, oblita quid esset;
Ursaque conspectos in montibus horruit ursos;
Pertimuitque lupos, quamvis pater esset in illis."⁵

The comic element is of course found elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses*, but, as one point among others, it has perhaps some significance in linking *Callisto* with *Io*.

¹ *Met.*, ii., 527-530. Apart from the actual words used, these four lines strongly suggest the last two quoted by Hyginus.

² *Met.*, ii., 409-410.

³ *Met.*, i., 690-691.

⁴ *Met.*, ii., 423-424.

⁵ *Met.*, ii., 493-495.

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If, then, the conclusion be accepted that Ovid is following Calvus, the *Io* of Calvus may be assumed to have been a conventional epyllion of no great merit, but technically correct in form, with a digression possibly dealing with Callisto. The evidence is not sufficient to constitute a proof, but, in view of what evidence there is, the theory is plausible.

From the fragments of Cinna's *Zmyrna* we can gather nothing; they consist of two consecutive lines, one single line, and one word. But we know something of the general character of the poem from external evidence. Catullus¹ tells us that it was, comparatively speaking, a short poem, and that Cinna spent nine years in writing it. The nine years composition is also attested by Servius and Quintilian.² Martial bears witness to its obscurity:

"Scribere te quæ vix intellegat ipse Modestus
Et vix Claranus, quid rogo, Sexte, iuvat?
Non lectore tuis opus est sed Apolline libris.
Iudice te maior Cinna Marone fuit."³

Vergil evidently admired Cinna, for he couples him with Varius in the ninth Eclogue:

"Nam neque adhuc Vario videor, nec dicere Cinna
Digna, sed argutos inter strepere anser olores."⁴

Servius in commenting on this passage describes Cinna as *poeta optimus*. Catullus also praises the *Zmyrna* highly, so that we may conclude that, in spite of its repulsive subject, it was good of its kind. The three surviving lines give us no illustration of its obscurity, but two of them form the address to the heroine which is so common in epyllion style:

¹ Cat., xcv.

² Serv. *ad* Verg. *Ecl.*, ix., 35. Quint., x., 4, 4.

³ Mart., x., 21, 1-4.

⁴ *Ecl.*, ix., 35-36.

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"Te matutinus flentem conspexit Eous
Et flentem paulo vidit post Hesperus idem."¹

The plot is of the morbidly sensational type used by Euphorion and Parthenius. Of the extant Latin epyllia, the *Ciris* is probably the nearest to it in form, while Ovid's *Myrrha* gives us the substance of the story. In spite of the fame of the poem and the probability that it contained passages of poetic beauty, it is difficult to imagine that it could ever be attractive, except during the period when its type was fashionable; and, overburdened as it was with obscure learning, it is probably no loss to literature except as a curiosity.

It may be supposed that, like other Latin epyllia, the *Zmyrna* had a digression, and it is not impossible that the story of Scylla was used for this purpose. It is a parallel story of crime, and the author of the *Ciris* actually connects the two stories, where the nurse prays that Scylla may not be meditating the crime of Myrrha.² The nurse in Ovid's *Myrrha* seems to owe something to Scylla's nurse in the *Ciris*, and though Ovid may simply have imitated the *Ciris*, it is possible that both authors were drawing from the same source. This source may have been the *Zmyrna*; for the author of the *Ciris* evidently had the poem in mind, in writing the nurse's speech to Scylla. But the nurse is a stock character in such stories, as appears from several of the tales of Parthenius; and the slight connection, which seems to exist between the *Zmyrna*, the *Ciris* and the *Myrrha*, does not necessarily prove that both subjects were included in the *Zmyrna*.

¹ Serv. *ad Verg.*, *Georg.*, i., 288.

² *Ciris*, 237-240.

VII

THE CULEX

THE problem of the *Culex* has received a great deal more attention than is demanded by the intrinsic worth of the poem. It is a work of little merit, and, though it differs considerably from any previous epyllion, it remains isolated and has inspired no imitators. In itself it is little more than a literary curiosity, the work of an author who, while scrupulously preserving the epyllion form, has endeavoured to introduce a new type of subject. In a consideration of the history of the epyllion it deserves study as an excellent example of the form; but its importance is enormously increased, if it is indeed an early work of Vergil.

On the question of the authorship and date there has been a long controversy, which is still proceeding, and is likely to proceed indefinitely, unless further external evidence is brought to light. It is not necessary here to recapitulate the history of this controversy.¹ But since any final estimate of the place of the *Culex* in literature must depend on the opinion held with regard to the Vergilian authorship, the evidence on this point must be considered.

A remark of Lucan quoted by Suetonius in his life of that poet gives us the earliest reference to the *Culex*: "Qui tantæ levitatis et tam immoderatæ linguæ fuit ut

¹ See *La Culex*. Charles Plésent. Paris. 1910. A full account is given in the first chapter.

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in præfatione quadam ætatem et initia sua cum Vergilio comparans ausus sit dicere 'et quantum mihi restat ad Culicem?'¹

Statius in his address to Lucan confirms this boast:

"Tu Pelusiaci scelus Canopi
Deflebis pius et Pharo cruenta
Pompeio dabis altius sepulchrum;
Hæc primo iuvenis canes sub ævo
Ante annos Culicis Maroniani."²

Martial has two references:

"Accipe facundi Culicem, studiose, Maronis
Ne nucibus positis arma virumque legas."³

and :

"Protinus Italiam concepit et arma virumque,
Qui modo vix Culicem fleverat ore rudi."⁴

Finally Suetonius in his life of Vergil has the following passage: "Deinde Catalepton et Priapeia et Epigrammata et Diras item Cirim et Culicem cum esset annorum xvi. Cuius materia talis est. Pastor fatigatus æstu cum sub arbore obdormisset et serpens ad illum proreperet e palude, culex prævolavit atque inter duo tempora aculeum fixit pastori. At ille continuo culicem contrivit et serpentem interemit ac sepulchrum culici statuit et distichon fecit:

"Parve Culex, pecudum custos tibi tale merenti
Funeris officium vitæ pro munere reddit."⁵

Servius in his life of Vergil also includes the *Culex* among the minor poems.

It is clearly established by these passages that Vergil

¹ Suet., *Vita Luc.*, Reifferscheid, p. 50.

² Stat., *Silv.*, ii., 7, 70-74.

³ Mart., xiv., 185.

⁴ Mart., viii., 56, 19-20.

⁵ Suet., *Vita Verg.*, 17-18.

The *Culex*

wrote a *Culex*, that it was written at an early age and that it bore the signs of the poet's immaturity. Moreover, by his summary and quotation Suetonius proves that he believed the *Culex* as we know it to be Vergil's. There is indeed some ground for believing that the *Culex* is the only one of the minor poems mentioned by Suetonius. His statement as it stands is sheer nonsense; if the *Ciris* is accepted as Vergilian, it cannot have been written at the same date as the *Culex*; the difference is too great. Moreover, it is curious that Suetonius should give a summary of the *Culex* only; the *Ciris* is a much better and more important poem. Nettleship,¹ basing his argument on a manuscript variation, reads "Deinde Culicem cum esset annorum xvi." The correction is supported by the metrical *Life* of Phocas; this work, which is obviously based on Suetonius, mentions only the *Culex*.

The external evidence for the genuineness of the *Culex* is therefore very good—so good in fact that it cannot be dismissed without very good cause. The main objection to it rests upon internal evidence; it is maintained by many that the *Culex* is totally unworthy of Vergil and has no Vergilian characteristics. Before this objection can be considered it is necessary to arrive at some conclusion with regard to the date.

The statements of Lucan, Statius and Martial all make it clear that the *Culex* was the earliest known work of Vergil, and was written when he was very young. Suetonius, if the reading is correct, states positively that Vergil was sixteen when he wrote the *Culex*; un-

¹ *Ancient Lives of Vergil*. Oxford. 1879. p. 13. One MS. reads: "Deinde Moretum et Priapeiam et Epigrammata et Diras et Culicem."

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fortunately there is some variation in the manuscripts, "xv" and "xx" being also found. From Suetonius, however, one definite fact can be established: the earliest possible date for the writing of the *Culex* is 55 or 54 B.C. It must, however, be subsequent to the publication of the *de Rerum Natura*,¹ so that 55 B.C., the year in which Lucretius died, becomes unlikely. Thus it may be confidently asserted that the earliest possible date is 54 B.C., when Vergil was sixteen.

On internal evidence the latest possible date is 48 B.C., the year in which Octavius assumed the *toga virilis*. Dr. Warde Fowler² has shown conclusively that the language of the dedication is appropriate to Octavius before this date, but not after it. Thus the date of the *Culex* certainly falls between 54 B.C. and 48 B.C.

Dr. Warde Fowler considers that 50 B.C., the year in which Julius Cæsar was in Cisalpine Gaul, is a likely date for the dedication, though the poem may have been composed earlier. This date would agree with the variant "xx" in Suetonius, and is most likely to be correct as far as the dedication is concerned; it cannot in any case have been written as early as 54 B.C., when Octavius was only nine years old. On the other hand, as Dr. Warde Fowler suggests, the poem itself may have been written when Vergil was sixteen. If the *Culex* really belongs to two distinct dates the variation in the manuscripts of Suetonius represents two separate traditions, both of which have a definite foundation of truth. Internal evidence very strongly suggests that the

¹ There is considerable evidence of Lucretian influence in the *Culex*. Cf. Plérent. p. 81.

² Note on *Culex* Lines 24-41. *Class. Rev.*, 1914, p. 119.

The *Culex*

poem, apart from its dedication, should be placed as early as possible.

Here it becomes necessary to consider the question whether, on internal evidence, the *Culex* can be Vergil's. Miss E. Jackson¹ has shown that the *Culex* is full of passages which bear a striking likeness to Vergil's mature work. Moreover, these resemblances are far more subtle than those which might be produced by a deliberate imitator. Anyone who could have imitated Vergil so closely as to catch the turn of phrase and yet to avoid wholesale borrowing, would have produced something much better than the *Culex*. It is not good enough to be the work of a clever imitator or forger. Mr. D. L. Drew² has shown by means of a minute examination of the common sources of the *Culex* and Vergil's known works that the *Culex* gives evidence of imitation of pre-Vergilian rather than Vergilian poems; and that Vergil and the author of the *Culex* had so intimate a knowledge of one another's methods that it is hardly possible to regard them as separate persons. The whole argument is too elaborate for summary here, but the proof on internal evidence that the *Culex* is Vergil's is satisfactory.

In fact, if the *Culex* is not Vergil's, some very serious difficulties arise. We have to assume a poet who was clever enough to imitate Vergil in a very subtle fashion, and yet unable to produce a poem of any merit. Moreover, we must assume that the writers of the Silver Age accepted his work as Vergil's without question. Granting the possibility of such a poet, how did his

¹ *The Authorship of the Culex. Class Quart.*, 1911. Vol. V., p. 163.

² *Culex*. Basil Blackwell. Oxford. 1925.

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work come to be accepted as Vergil's? It could not have been written till after Vergil's death, when Vergil's work was well known. Even supposing the authentic *Culex* to have disappeared, there must have been a number of people who remembered it. Yet the imitation must have been accepted as authentic very quickly, for the sources of Suetonius are early and good. Critics who deny the Vergilian authorship have not so far succeeded in disposing satisfactorily of these difficulties. Yet there is no real difficulty in accepting the *Culex* as the original poem by Vergil. It is a bad poem and quite unworthy of its author in his maturity; but the key to the problem lies in the date. If we regard it as the work of a boy with a good ear and an undeveloped gift of expression, its weakness is not only natural, but inevitable.

Vergil's genius developed very slowly. The date of the *Eclogues* cannot be determined with any certainty, but the fourth at any rate belongs to the year 40 B.C. and it is probably not the earliest. Thus Vergil at the age of thirty was still producing work, which, though beautiful, was distinctly immature. The years that lay between the *Culex* and the *Eclogues* had seen an enormous advance in power, and the extraordinary difference can only be accounted for if we suppose that the *Culex* was written very early, in fact in 54 B.C.—the earliest possible date.

Some critics have denied the possibility of a boy of sixteen producing a poem as elaborate and correct as the *Culex*.¹ It is possible that they have had no acquaint-

¹ Cf. Teuffel & Schwabe. *History of Roman Literature*. (Trans. Warr), p. 442. Nettleship. Life of Vergil in Conington & Nettleship's *Vergil*.

The Culex

tance with children's poems. It is not at all uncommon to find even very young children, who write verse, and seem naturally incapable of producing unrhythmical lines, although the rhythm is frequently harsh and ugly. Probably, except in cases of unusually early development, there is little to distinguish the childish works of great poets from those of men who never write a line in later life. It is likely that, if the *Culex* were judged in the light of a collection of youthful poems, most of it would appear neither better nor worse than any of them.

It will therefore be assumed that the *Culex* is a genuine early work of Vergil, probably written in 54 B.C.;¹ and that the dedication is a later addition probably belonging to the year 50 B.C., but in any case not later than 48 B.C.

The story of the *Culex* is very simple. A shepherd, who has taken out his goats to pasture, falls asleep in the heat of the day. A serpent passes by and is about to strike him, when a gnat wakes the sleeper by stinging him: the shepherd, as he starts up to kill the serpent, crushes the gnat. At night the ghost of the gnat appears to him in a dream, lamenting the cruelty of fate; it tells

Fifth Edition, p. xx. A young poet, in producing a poem belonging to an established type, would be likely to devote great care to metrical technique.

¹ There is no real difficulty in the language used by Lucan and Statius. This has been shown satisfactorily by Professor W. B. Anderson (*Statius and the Date of the Culex. Class. Quart.*, 1916, p. 225.) He contends that the *Civil War* was begun and parts recited at a very early age, and that *primo sub ævo* must refer to the period closely following the assumption of the *toga virilis*. Thus Statius may have thought the *Culex* was written at sixteen; or he may have dated the composition by the dedication, putting it a few years later.

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all the story and in a long digression describes the underworld and the famous dead. The shepherd on waking raises a mound in memory of the gnat, plants flowers upon it and inscribes an epitaph in memory of his gratitude.

The source of the story, if it is not original, is unknown. Zenobius¹ mentions a story of one Cissamis, who killed an eel; it afterwards appeared to him in a dream and demanded burial. Some such story may very well have suggested the latter part of the *Culex*. But there are also points in common with the fable type. The characters, a shepherd, a serpent and a gnat, might well belong to a fable. The slaying of a benefactor is a well-known fable motive, though in the usual version the slayer is malicious. But the origin of the story is of little importance; what is really interesting is that Vergil deserted the tradition which had previously made the characters of epyllion the heroes of mythology and romance, and had required at least one, if not both, of the principal characters to be of royal birth.

We may enquire what impelled Vergil in the year 54 B.C. to write an epyllion. The primary inspiration must have been the *de Rerum Natura*; it was just published, and was something entirely new in Latin literature; its appearance must have aroused many young men to write epic verse. But a scientific poem would not have much attraction for a boy, and the Latin epyllia were shorter and easier models. Thus with the *de Rerum Natura* the *Peleus and Thetis* must be coupled. The influence of Lucretius is obvious; that of Catullus is scarcely less so, and Mr. Drew notes that the *Peleus*

¹ Zen., iv., 64 (*Cit.*, Plésent).

The Culex

and *Thetis* is frequently imitated. Vergil had probably read other Latin epyllia as well; he was clearly affected by the prevailing fashion, and Catullus, whose epyllion was probably the most recent as well as the best, was the obvious model. Apart from resemblances of detail the two poems are alike in certain points of structure.

Whether Vergil had read the Greek epyllia is doubtful. There is certainly no evidence of borrowing from Callimachus, and there is no resemblance to the epic idylls of Theocritus which may not be accidental, though Mr. Drew finds evidence of imitation of the pastorals. In the digression Homer appears to be the main Greek influence.

We may picture Vergil, in his first enthusiasm for the new poetry, setting out to write an epyllion in the modern style and with due attention to the rules. If he was *audax iuventa* when he wrote the *Eclogues*, he was far more so when he wrote the *Culex*. He had no equipment for the task except a correct ear, a considerable knowledge of literature and that power of accurate observation which is one of the outstanding characteristics of all his work. The power of self-expression, the feeling for subtleties of assonance and alliteration, above all the great imagination which came slowly to maturity under the stress of deeply-felt experience—all these were still to come. No doubt he was proud of his epyllion. He seems to have had no misgivings when he wrote the dedication. There is no suggestion of the self-distrust with which he began the *Aeneid*. The poem is a light one, but he will write more serious ones later.

The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid

In choosing a subject, Vergil was no doubt influenced by his surroundings. It was inevitable that he should adopt the idyllic style, and it was most natural that his pictures should represent the only life he knew. In the first half of the poem there are many passages, which are gracefully conceived, though the treatment is frequently clumsy. The love of nature is genuinely felt, and the scenes are accurately described; now and again there is a touch of real beauty in the description. We find it in the picture of the goats going to the water:

“Et iam compellente vagæ pastore capellæ
Ima susurrantis repetebant ad vada lymphæ
Quæ subter viridem residebant cærula muscum.”¹

or of the ivy climbing the trees:

“hederæque ligantes
Bracchia, fraternos plangat ne populus ictus,
Ipsæque escendunt ad summa cacumina lentæ
Pinguntque aureolos viridi pallore corymbos.”²

The epyllion must of course have a digression, and the digression must show a contrast. Technically speaking, the digression of the *Culex* could not be better suited to its purpose. The epic subject is well contrasted with the pastoral, and there is an additional and typically Vergilian contrast between the brightness of the country scenes and the dreariness of the underworld. There is also plenty of opportunity for a display of learning in the true Alexandrian style. That the mythology of the *Culex* is not particularly obscure is no doubt due to insufficiency of knowledge; but Vergil seems to have done his best and has certainly included a considerable mass of legend. The allusive method of

¹ *Cul.*, 104-106.

² *Cul.*, 141-144.

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introducing some of the legends is typically Alexandrian.¹

The main subject is resumed in a short conclusion, which gives a pretty picture of the flowery mound, though here also the expression falls short of the conception.²

The *Culex*, then, technically conforms to all the rules of epyllion. It has a main subject and a digression, and the two are carefully contrasted both in style and subject. The link between them is supplied by the fact that the same character—the gnat—has an important part in both. The main subject, in spite of the abuse that has been heaped upon it, is by no means an unpromising one, and the possibilities of the digression are obvious. It is want of power rather than any inherent difficulty which makes the poem dull. The pastoral scenes are the best, for in these Vergil was writing from experience; but his imagination was as yet undeveloped; he had read widely, but he could not put life and reality into the old legends, and he had not gained the power of selecting judiciously from his sources. The digression is overburdened with the amount of material crammed into it, and the Roman heroes come in very awkwardly in a poem, whose setting is ostensibly Greek. But these faults are due to inexperience and to the natural desire of a young writer to show off the extent of his knowledge, which must have been considerable when judged by the standard of his surroundings.

¹ E.g.

“Ite puellæ,
Ite, quibus tædas accendit tristis Erinys:
Sicut Hymen præfata dedit conubia Mortis.”

245-247.

² See Note III. The *Culex* and the *Ariflaus*.

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Elaborate criticism of a boy's work is out of place. But the *Culex* is not without a certain significance both in Vergil's career, and in Latin literature. Vergil here for the first time was handling the two subjects which throughout his life had such an absorbing interest for him—the beauty of nature and the world of the dead. It has been said that the characteristic Vergilian note does not appear in the *Culex*. But in the contrast between the two subjects there is a foreshadowing of it; there is the sense of the pathos of life—of the *lacrima rerum*—which pervades all Vergil's work. Moreover, in the *Culex*, as elsewhere, it is not only human life which has pathos; all life has it; the sympathy, which in the *Georgics* embraces all creatures, is felt genuinely for the gnat. The sentiment is there, though Vergil cannot express it yet. We may find a touch of it in the gnat's last words:

“Digredior nunquam rediturus: tu cole fontem
Et viridis nemorum silvas et pascua lætus;
Et mea diffusas rapiantur dicta per auras.”¹

We cannot estimate how far the writing of the *Culex* influenced Vergil's thought, but it is, at least, interesting to find in it the first traces of his later development.

Dr. Mackail has pointed out that the *Eclogues* were the manifesto of the new poetry.¹ The literary interest of the *Culex* lies in the fact that it shows the new poetry in embryo. For the *Culex*, with all its strict adherence to the epyllion form, with all its imitations, faults and weaknesses, has originality. Like Catullus, Vergil tried to construct a long epyllion in the idyllic form, and like

¹ *Cul.*, 381-383.

¹ *Virgil and Virgilianism. Class. Rev.*, 1908, p. 65.

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Catullus he failed; but the reason is different. Catullus aimed at a lengthened version of the Greek epic idyll, and it is the sheer force of his genius that makes the *Peleus and Thetis* a great poem, and not merely a bad imitation of Greek. Vergil also adopted the Greek form, and shows a slight advance on Catullus in his handling of it. The main subject has a definite plot, and the poem gives the impression of a united whole rather than a series of parts. It is possible, however, that the other Latin epyllion writers were better at construction than Catullus, and that Vergil owed something to them. But the *Culex* has two claims to originality: one is the new note of sympathy with nature, which has already been mentioned; the other is the deliberate attempt to Latinise the spirit of the epyllion. The scene is laid in Greece, but the inspiration is Italian; Pales appears among the Greek patrons of poetry; the Roman heroes are with the Greeks in Elysium. However awkwardly introduced and inappropriate to the subject, here are the first touches of the nationalism, which inspires Vergil's poetry.

VIII

THE CIRIS AND THE SCHOOL OF CORNELIUS GALLUS

HISTORICALLY the *Ciris* is the most interesting and important of the extant Latin epyllia, since it not only represents the epyllion as conceived by Parthenius, but it possesses every characteristic of the epyllion form. It illustrates in a marked degree both the faults and merits of the followers of Euphron. Its true place in Latin literature has been somewhat obscured by the long continued controversy concerning its date and author. It is not merely an anonymous minor poem; it is the one typical epyllion of this period which we still possess.

Interesting as is the problem of the authorship, it does not affect the literary position of the poem. Whether it belongs to the period of Vergil's youth or is the work of a later poet returning to a bygone fashion, it still remains a striking example of its type. Even those critics who uphold the theory that it was written after Vergil's death, admit that the author has completely mastered the spirit and manner of the *Cantores Euphronis*. Thus the *Ciris* is in a very different position from the *Culex*. The *Culex* is of no importance whatever unless it is Vergil's; the *Ciris* is extremely important, whoever wrote it.

It is, therefore, unnecessary here to recapitulate the details of the controversy dating from the publication of

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Professor Skutsch's book, *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*,¹ in which the authorship of Cornelius Gallus is maintained. The theories set forth in this book have been much disputed, but the balance of probability is overwhelmingly in favour of the early date, and the case for Gallus is very strong.

It is, as Professor Skutsch points out, almost impossible to suppose that a poet writing after 19 B.C. should have so faithfully reproduced *all* the characteristics of an earlier period. It is not merely that the *Ciris* is typically Alexandrian in form, subject and treatment; it is characterised by the long period and preponderance of spondaic over dactylic feet, which are typical of Catullus and Lucretius.²

The theory that it is by Vergil has scarcely anything to support it; it depends in fact solely upon the Vergilian lines. Professor Skutsch has shown that there is no real difficulty in supposing that Vergil borrowed from the *Ciris*, and his arguments have been amplified by Mr. W. R. Hardie³ and Dr. Mackail.⁴ Indeed, Dr. Mackail's theory that Vergil may have contributed to the *Ciris*, and certainly influenced the author, disposes of any

¹ *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*. Leipzig. 1901, and Vol. II. *Gallus und Vergil*. Leipzig. 1906.

² Mr. R. F. Thomason (*The Ciris and Ovid. Classical Philology*, 1923-24) attempts to show by a comparison of language that the *Ciris* is by Ovid. All that he actually does prove is that the language is not Vergilian. It may be urged against his contention that the vocabulary of the epyllion writers certainly differed from that of epic writers and probably tended to be similar in all epyllia. The argument is therefore valueless unless we possessed all the Latin epyllia and could trace Ovid's debt to them.

³ *On some non-metrical arguments bearing on the date of the Ciris. Journal of Philology* XXX. 1907.

⁴ *Virgil and Virgilianism*.

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difficulty that might be felt. Against the Vergilian theory the following points may be noted in addition to those mentioned by Professor Skutsch. There is no external evidence except a very doubtful ascription in the lives of Vergil by Suetonius and Servius.¹ The distribution of dactyls and spondees in the lines is not very close to that of any period of Vergil's known work.² In this respect the *Ciris* is much nearer to the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* than to the *Eclogues*; yet it cannot be supposed that any work of Vergil's, published subsequently to the *Eclogues*, should not have been noticed by some poet, critic or biographer. Again, the *Ciris* shows marked resemblances to Vergil's work, but it lacks the Vergilian spirit. The poet has a fine imagination, but it is not Vergil's imagination; he feels for his heroine, but not with her. The depth of sympathy, which is found occasionally even in the *Culex*, is lacking. Moreover, the author of the *Ciris* has not Vergil's close observation and intimacy with nature. Finally, if the *Culex* is Vergil's, the case against the *Ciris* is considerably strengthened, for it can hardly be supposed that the two are by the same hand. There is no real difficulty in the theory that the *Culex* represents an early attempt of Vergil, since metrically it resembles the *Eclogues*, and is not unlike Vergil's work in conception. But it is very difficult to suppose that, between the *Culex* and the *Eclogues*, Vergil produced a poem which metrically resembles his later work, and is

¹ See p. 143. Servius clearly based his Life on earlier Lives, in which various non-Vergilian poems were ascribed to Vergil. His list of works, in addition to those mentioned in the Life of Suetonius, includes the non-Vergilian *Etna*.

² See Note IV. Metrical Tests of the Authorship of the *Culex* and *Ciris*.

The *Ciris*

totally unlike the *Culex* or the *Eclogues* in general conception and treatment. The development of Vergil's art from the *Culex* to the *Aeneid* proceeds on clearly defined lines; but the *Ciris* will not fit into it at any point.

The *Ciris* then is either the work of Gallus or of some unknown poet of the same circle. For the purpose of the study of the epyllion it is immaterial which of the two possibilities is correct. On the whole there is more to be said in favour of Gallus than of an unknown poet. He satisfies all the conditions required, and Dr. Mac-kail's theory of co-operation gives a simple solution of the problem of the Vergilian lines. At least we know of no other poet who was an intimate friend of Vergil and wrote epyllion. If Professor Skutsch is right in his theory that the song of Silenus in the sixth Eclogue is a catalogue of the epyllia of Gallus,¹ the identification of the author of the *Ciris* with Gallus seems certain; but even if that theory be rejected, the case for Gallus is still very strong.

Whoever was the actual writer, the *Ciris* represents the epyllion of the school of Gallus, the *Cantores Euphorionis* of Cicero; and Vergil in the sixth Eclogue, whether he is cataloguing the epyllia of Gallus or not, has clearly in mind epyllia, real or imaginary, of the school. Thus the *Ciris* marks the culminating point of the formal epyllion; from Euphorion to the *Ciris* the form seems to have been entirely stereotyped, and we have here one of the latest examples of that artificial type, which was to receive a new handling and treatment from the genius of Vergil and Ovid.

¹ *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*, C. II.

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The opening of the *Ciris* is both obscure and tedious. It begins with a dedication to Messalla in the course of which the poet expresses his desire to devote himself to Epicurean philosophy. This is followed by a statement of the subject, and a discussion of the identity of Scylla, which may have been clear to a contemporary, who was familiar with Alexandrian poetry as a whole, but is obscure to a modern reader. The dedication and discussion, ending with a short appeal to the Muses, occupy the first hundred lines, and it would be difficult to imagine a more unpromising opening.

The first sixty lines of the narrative are not much better. There is an account of the siege of Megara by Minos and of Nisus and his purple hair. Scylla, the daughter of Nisus, falls in love with Minos. This love is a punishment for the crime of perjury committed by Scylla in some manner which, owing to the allusiveness of the style, is not very clear. The account of Scylla's madness is better, but the progress of the story is interrupted by an address to Nisus and the birds, and it is not until line 206 that the narrative begins to move. From this point the interest increases, the style and language become less obscure, and the poem maintains a high level of dramatic interest and includes many passages of real beauty.

Scylla, approaching her father's chamber by night in order to cut off the purple lock, is discovered by her nurse, Carme. In the dialogue which follows she confesses her purpose and her love. Her confession introduces the digression on the story of Britomartis, which is told by Carme. Scylla is persuaded to attempt other means of winning Minos, but when all fail, Carme aids

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her to cut off the purple lock and Megara is taken. Scylla is fastened to the ship of Minos and drawn through the sea. Her lament is of considerable beauty, as is also the account of the course of the fleet which follows it. The poem ends with the transformation of Nisus and Scylla into birds.

The story as it stands appears to be derived from several sources, none of which can be traced back very far. The earliest known reference to the betrayal of Megara occurs in the *Choephora* of Æschylus:

ἄλλαν δ' ἔστιν ἐν λόγοις στυγεῖν
φοινίαν κόραν,
ἅτ' ἐχθρῶν ὑπαὶ
φῶτ' ἀπώλεσεν φίλον Κρητικοῖς
χρυσοκμήτοισιν ὄρμοις
πιθήσασα δώροισι Μίνω,
Νῆσον ἀθανάτας τριχὺς
νοσφίσας' ἀπροβούλως
πνείονθ' ἃ κυνόφρων ὕπνω.¹

This version does not occur elsewhere; it is a close parallel to the story of Tarpeia in Roman legend, where the city is betrayed for the sake of the gold bracelets of the Sabines.

The first version containing the love motive may have been the play mentioned by Ovid in his list of love tragedies in the *Tristia*:

"Impia nec tragicos tetigisset Scylla coturnos,
Ni patrium crinem desecuisset amor."²

¹ Æsch., *Choeph.*, 612-622.

² Ov., *Tristia*, ii., 393-394.

The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid

The author and date of this play are unknown, but Rohde is probably right in ascribing it to one of the later dramatists.¹ It may be safely assumed that it was earlier than the *Ciris*.

A fragment of Callimachus seems to allude to the story:

Σκύλλα γυνὴ κατάκασσα καὶ οὐ ψύθος οὐνομ' ἔχουσα.²

But, if he told the story, there is no evidence to show what version he used.

These three passages are the only ones which prove that the story of Scylla was in existence before the *Ciris* was written, since the date of Apollodorus, who gives the story, is uncertain.³ Parthenius included it in his *Metamorphoses*,⁴ but it is impossible to say whether this work was earlier than the *Ciris* or not. There is no trace of the metamorphosis of Scylla before Parthenius and the *Ciris*. Other passages dealing with or referring to the love of Scylla are later in date than the *Ciris* and do not differ from it except in details.

The theme of Nisus, the purple lock and the betrayal of Megara to Minos seem to be older. From Pausanias' account of Megara it is clear that Nisus was an ancient local hero. Pausanias mentions the destruction of Megara by Minos, the building of its walls by Alcaeus and Apollo and the tradition of the singing stone.⁵ He does not tell the story of Scylla in connection with

¹ *Der Griechische Roman*, p. 37.

² Call., fr. 184.

³ Apoll., iii. 15, 8. His version differs slightly from others in making Minos tie Scylla to his ship by her feet.

⁴ Schol. Dionys. Perieg., v. 420. See p. 106.

⁵ Paus., i. 39, 5; 41, 5; 42, 1.

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Megara itself, but gives it in his account of the so-called tomb of Nisus at Athens,¹ and of Cape Scyllæum, where he says that Minos had Scylla thrown from his ship.² In fact he states that the Megarians did not admit that Megara was ever taken by the Cretans at all. Æschylus establishes the fact that in his time the legend was current in Athens, but it seems possible that the original Megarian traditions about Nisus did not include the treachery of Scylla.

The betrayal motive has many parallels, and was evidently extremely popular with the Alexandrians. In the *Love Romances* of Parthenius there are three close parallels to the Minos and Scylla romance. The betrayal of a father and his city by a daughter occurs as an incident in the story of Leucippus,³ and is the subject of the stories of Pisidice and Nanis.⁴ In both these stories the incident is attached to well-known names, Pisidice falling in love with Achilles at the siege of Methymna and Nanis with Cyrus at the siege of Sardis. No sources are given for Pisidice, but those of Nanis are Alexandrian.

It may be noted also that there are two common folk-tale motives in the story, the purple hair on which the strength of Nisus depends, and the final metamorphosis of Nisus and Scylla. The purple hair must be part of the betrayal story, but the metamorphosis is probably late, as it cannot be traced to any source earlier than Parthenius. It would seem that a nature myth relating to the two birds has been attached to the story.

Thus we have a romance which is very complex in its

¹ Paus. i., 19, 5.

³ Parth., *Erot. Path.*, v.

² Paus. ii., 34, 7.

⁴ Parth., *Erot. Path.*, xxi and xxii.

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elements. It begins with the Megarian tradition of Nisus, who may or may not have been a historical person. Whether the Cretan war and the treachery of Scylla belong originally to Megarian legend or not is uncertain, but they were certainly established in it at the time when Æschylus wrote the *Choephoræ*. At this point we have a typical folk-tale attached to historical or semi-historical persons. Later a tragedian, probably Alexandrian, added the love motive, thus producing a typical Alexandrian romance. There is an extremely interesting parallel for this in the addition of a love motive to the story of Tarpeia by Propertius.¹ The metamorphosis was probably a still later addition. Such a process involving the combination of the three elements of local tradition, love romance and folk-tale probably accounts for many of the Alexandrian romances. All three, separately or in conjunction, are frequent in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

The Britomartis digression is perhaps taken from Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*.² The connection between the two heroines, secured by introducing Carme, the mother of Britomartis, as Scylla's nurse, is evidently an ingenious device of the author himself. He has, however, made a curious mistake. There were two traditions with regard to Carme's father; according to one he was Eubulus, a Cretan; according to the other Phœnix. In the *Ciris* she is the daughter of Ogygian Phœnix;³ yet we are told that she was a native of Crete:

¹ Prop. iv. 4. The parallel is singularly close, as the original story of Tarpeia resembles Æschylus' version of the story of Scylla.

² Call., Hymn iii. 189-203.

³ *Ciris*, 220.

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"Rursus ad inceptum sociam se iungit alumnae,

Non minus illa tamen, revehi quod moenia Cressa
Gaudeat: et cineri patria est iucunda sepulto."¹

We have thus, both in the main story and the digression, subjects which were especially adapted to epyllion. The main story gives us a guilty heroine, a sensational crime and a tragic ending; the digression exemplifies another common Alexandrian type² where a maiden is loved against her will, and escapes capture only by death.³ But it is not only in subject that the *Ciris* conforms closely to Alexandrian models; the style, the treatment and the composition are all true to type. The dedication and statement of the subject⁴ find their closest parallel in the *Culex*. Both poems open with an apology for the triviality of the work and a promise of more serious subjects in the future. Both dedications are profusely decorated with mythological allusions, as if to show off the learning and dexterity of the authors. Neither opening has much merit, but that of the *Culex* is simple and straightforward and thus is preferable to that of the *Ciris*, which is clumsy in construction and self-conscious in tone. The general similarity suggests a common source, and we have the evidence of the *Hylas* of Theocritus to show that an epyllion might be dedicated to a friend. There is, however, little likeness between the graceful opening of the *Hylas* and the long-winded dedications of the *Culex* and *Ciris*, and it is probable that Euphoriion is here responsible. Meineke⁵

¹ *Ciris*, 381, 384-385.

² Cf. Parth., *Erot. Path.*, xv., xxvi.

³ Carme mentions the deification of Britomartis, but regards it with doubt.

⁴ *Ciris*, 1-53.

⁵ *Analecta Alexandrina*, p. 16.

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suggests that some of the titles of Euphorion's works are the names of persons to whom they were dedicated; if so, our knowledge of Euphorion's methods would lead us to infer that his dedications were very like that of the *Ciris*.

The discussion of the subject¹ can be definitely referred to the influence of Euphorion. The fragment of the *Hyacinthus* which appears to contain the opening lines of the poem supplies evidence of such a discussion.² Here again, without any confirmatory evidence, imitation of Euphorion might be assumed. The whole passage is learned and allusive, and some of it is scarcely intelligible. Cicero's *nimis obscurus* applies equally well to the author of the *Ciris*.

A short appeal to the Muses precedes the narrative. There is a similar appeal to Apollo and other deities in the introduction to the *Culex*, but no example occurs in extant Greek epyllion. Such appeals, however, are a commonplace of epic style.

From this point the narrative is taken up; it moves slowly in long clumsy sentences, and is constantly interrupted by obscure allusions and moralisings on the part of the author. The essential parts of the story are mentioned casually or dropped in by means of a parenthesis. We gather that Scylla had offended Juno by committing perjury, though the details are not clear; possibly it was assumed that the reader would know them from some earlier work.³ Again Scylla's madness

¹ *Ciris*, 54-91.

² Parthenius also suggests the possibility of such discussions. See p. 112.

³ This may have been the *Metamorphoses* of Parthenius, but the date is not known. It is possible that Cinna's *Zmyrna* had a digression on Scylla. See p. 140.

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is described in great detail, but the turning-point of the story—her design to give her father's purple lock to Minos—is passed over in two lines, followed by a parenthesis, which states that Minos had laid this condition upon her. The whole of this passage¹ recalls the narrative style of Callimachus in the obscurer passages of the hymns, and no doubt would find many parallels in Euphorion's work also.

The address to Nisus and the daughters of Pandion, which here interrupts the story,² is not quite consistent with the tone of the whole. The transformation of Scylla is regarded as an honour, over which her kindred among the birds are to rejoice. At the end of the poem she is saved from death only to undergo further suffering:

"Infelix virgo nequiquam a morte recepta
Incultum solis in rupibus exigit ævum,
Rupibus et scopulis et litoribus desertis."³

So far the *Ciris* is a very fair representation of the Alexandrian method as it appears in the fragments of Euphorion, and the least interesting passages of Callimachus. The narration is tedious and difficult, the composition is weak and the style artificial. But the reader who has the patience to struggle through the first two hundred lines will find the rest of the poem worth the effort. It is not by any means faultless; in fact the whole poem is marred by allusiveness of style and suppression of essential points; but in spite of all its obscurity and artificiality, it has real poetic beauty and remarkable dramatic and psychological interest.

¹ *Ciris*, 101-190.

² *Ciris*, 191-205.

³ *Ciris*, 517-519.

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Scylla approaches the chamber of Nisus intending to cut off the lock; the picture is given with great force and beauty. It is one of the passages, which might easily have been written by Vergil; the language is clear and simple and each detail is vividly conceived and conveyed to the reader.

“Jamque adeo dulci devinctus lumina somno
Nisus erat, vigilumque procul custodia primis
Excubias foribus studio iactabat inani,
Cum furtim tacito descendens Scylla cubili
Auribus arrectis nocturna silentia temptat
Et pressis tenuem singultibus aera captat.
Tum suspensa levans digitis vestigia primis
Egreditur ferroque manus armata bidenti
Evolat; at demptæ subita in formidine vires
Cæreulas sua furta prius testantur ad umbras.
Nam qua se ad patrium tendebat semita limen,
Vestibulo in thalami paulum remoratur et alte
Suspicit ad celsi nitentia sidera mundi,
Non accepta piis promittens munera divis.”¹

Scylla's stealthy departure from her own room, her haste when she believes she has escaped detection and her sudden faintness are natural and true.

Scylla's pause gives time for her nurse, Carme, to overtake her. The action develops easily and naturally; Carme has heard the grating of the hinge and is just in time to save Scylla from falling. She has noticed the signs of Scylla's trouble for some time, and now she demands the cause. Scylla confesses her love for Minos, and declares her intention to die, if she cannot gain her end. Carme breaks into a long lament, which includes as the digression the story of her daughter Britomartis, to whom also Minos was fatal. She promises her aid,

¹ *Ciris*, 206-219.

The Ciris

and bids Scylla try all other means before betraying her father. Finally she soothes her to sleep and watches over her bed.

This scene, in spite of some faults, is full of beauty and tenderness. The two characters are carefully studied both individually and in relation to one another. The passage no doubt owes something to the scene between Phædra and her nurse in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, but the resemblance is superficial only. Scylla is less proud and more simple than Phædra, and Carme, while quite as tender, is not as unscrupulous as Phædra's nurse. Carme, indeed, is a fine study. Scylla has taken the place of her lost daughter, and is her only care and object in life. She cares nothing for Megara, where she is a captive and a slave, but Scylla will be happier if Megara is safe. Her thought at first is for Scylla only; later another motive is added—the hope of a return to Crete:

“Rursus ad inceptum sociam se iungit alumna,
Purpureumque parat rursus tondere capillum,
Tam longo quod iam captat succerrere amori,
Non minus illa tamen, revehi quod mœnia Cressa
Gaudeat: et cineri patria est iucunda sepulto.”¹

Scylla is slighter but perfectly convincing. She is entirely whole-hearted in her desire; she recognises it as evil, but there is no conflict between love and duty as there is in Ovid's Scylla. Yet she does not repel the reader as Ovid's Scylla does; she inspires pity, as being in the grip of a force she cannot control.

The mutual tenderness of the two women is finely drawn. Scylla, self-absorbed as she is, turns to Carme with perfect affection and trust:

¹ *Ciris*, 381-385.

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"Quod per te divum crebros testamur amores
Perque tuum memori sanctum mihi pectus alumnae,
Ut me, si servare potes, nec perdere malis;
Sin autem optata spes est incisa salutis
Ne mihi, quam merui, invidias, nutricula, mortem."¹

Carme's love for Scylla is exquisitely portrayed in two descriptive passages. In the first she covers the shivering girl with her own garment:

"Hæc loquitur, mollique ut se velavit amictu,
Frigidulam iniecta circumdat veste puellam,
Quæ prius in tenui steterat succincta crocota.
Dulcia deinde genis rorantibus oscula figens
Persequitur miseræ causas exquirere tabis,
Nec tamen ante ullas patitur sibi reddere voces,
Marmoreum tremebunda pedem quam rettulit intra."²

The second passage rises to the level of great poetry. The picture with its touches of realism is a very beautiful one:

"His ubi sollicitos animi relevaverat æstus
Vocibus et blanda pectus spe luserat ægrum,
Paulatim tremebunda genis obducere vestem
Virginis et placidam tenebris captare quietem,
Inverso bibulum restinguens lumen olivo,
Incipit ad crebrosque insani pectoris ictus
Ferre manum, adsiduis mulcens præcordia palmis.
Noctem illam sic mæsta super marcentis alumnae
Frigidulos cubito subnixa pependit ocellos."³

This is Alexandrian realism at its best; the method is, no doubt, that of Callimachus, but there is an individuality here, which reveals a poet of originality and genius. The last two lines with their diminutives have almost the tenderness of Catullus. It is notable that in this passage, perhaps the most individual and beautiful in the whole poem, there is little that suggests Vergil. Scylla now attempts various expedients in order to

¹ *Ciris*, 273-277.

² *Ciris*, 250-256.

³ *Ciris*, 340-348.

The Ciris

secure her marriage with Minos. The narrative, otherwise rapid and clear, is somewhat interrupted by the account of Carme's magic rites.¹ But no follower of the Alexandrians could resist the temptation of introducing witchcraft.

Scylla's final treachery and the fall of Megara are hurried over in a few lines, and Scylla appears fastened to the ship of Minos. The reader's knowledge of the story is assumed here, for there is no explanation of her position. The influence of Catullus is marked in the lines which show the nymphs watching her in wonder. The formal lament also shows the influence of Catullus; it is less beautiful than Ariadne's lament, but none the less has truth and feeling, and its conclusion:

"Sit satis hoc, tantum solam vidisse malorum,
Vel fato fuerit nobis hæc debita pestis,
Vel casu incerto, merita vel denique culpa;
Omnia nam potius quam te fecisse putabo,"²

is in keeping with Scylla's character.

The passage which follows, describing the course of the fleet, gives an opportunity for geographical description. Such a description is a common Alexandrian device, and is here used with excellent effect. First the desolation of the heroine is beautifully suggested:

"Languida fessæ
Virginis in cursu moritur querimonia longo."³

The sense of her weariness pervades the whole passage, as one famous shore after another is left behind. The author has here achieved the feeling of romance, which Apollonius and Vergil can convey by the use of place-names. Unfortunately the decision of Amphitrite to

¹ *Ciris*, 369-377.

² *Ciris*, 455-458.

³ *Ciris*, 461-46

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turn Scylla into a bird instead of a fish¹ is an anti-climax and spoils the beauty of the passage.

The metamorphosis is given with much detail, and has a certain grotesqueness about it, as such descriptions usually have. But there is pathos in the picture of the outcast Scylla:

“Nunquam illam post hæc oculi videre suorum
Purpureas flavo retinentem vertice vittas,
Non thalamus Syrio fragrans accepit amomo,
Nullæ illam sedes: quid enim cum sedibus illi?
Quæ simul ut sese cano de gurgite velox
Cum sonitu ad cælum stridentibus extulit alis
Et multum late dispersit in æquora rorem,
Infelix virgo nequiquam a morte recepta
Incultum solis in rupibus exigit ævum,
Rupibus et scopulis et litoribus desertis.”²

The poem concludes with the metamorphosis of Nisus and the eternal enmity of the two birds.

It is at once obvious that the *Ciris* differs from the *Peleus and Thetis* and the *Culex* in exactly the same way that the later Greek epyllion appears to have differed from the epic idyll. The interest is in the plot, the psychology of the characters is developed and the pictorial element is completely subordinate. The construction is more elaborate, and the digression is more skilfully handled. Faulty as the poem is, it shows a certain distinct advance upon the earlier Latin epyllia which are still extant.

The faults in construction are superficial and are probably due to carelessness. If we allow for the author's habit of obscuring important points, we shall find that the plot is well worked out. The introduction of Carme

¹ *Ciris*, 484-489.

² *Ciris* 510-519.

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and the study of her attitude add complexity to a simple outline. The handling of the digression is particularly noticeable. In no earlier epyllion is it so naturally introduced, or so carefully related to the main plot. So far as we have evidence, the digression up to this time is either a story shown by means of pictures, or told by some person who takes part in the main plot. It is quite distinct from the main story, and might almost be considered as a separate poem. In the *Ciris*, however, the method is different. The digression¹ is contained in Carme's second speech and really includes the previous history of Carme herself. Minos, she says, has been twice fatal to her. Though she has been brought as a captive to Megara, she cannot escape him. He has already destroyed her child Britomartis; he will now destroy her foster-child, the last bond that holds her to life. That Carme should tell the story of Britomartis in passing is entirely natural; she is a very common figure in literature—the talkative old woman—and if she is reminded of a story she tells it. But not only is the digression natural in its method of introduction; we learn from it the very important fact that the union of Minos and Scylla is to Carme's interest, since she came from Crete and now conceives the hope of returning; hence in the end she helps Scylla to betray Megara.

The digression is necessarily short, since a long narrative would have destroyed the dramatic fitness of the speech. It does not contrast in style with the rest of the poem, but there is both likeness and contrast in the two subjects. Minos is fatal to both maidens, but

¹ *Ciris*, 286-309.

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Britomartis flees from him, while Scylla desires him. Both are saved from death by transformation, but the innocent Britomartis becomes a goddess while the guilty Scylla is changed into a bird. Thus, while the digression has a real connection with the main action, it also conforms to the convention of exhibiting both a parallel and a contrast.

The interest is more definitely psychological than in any extant epyllion earlier than Ovid. It is probable, however, that the author was not original in this, for the Alexandrians were interested in psychology and Callimachus seems to have given at least one detailed study in Hecale. It is probable too that Euphorion made the epyllion the vehicle for studies in morbid psychology, and Cinna may also have done so in the *Zmyrna*. We have no means of knowing how the author of the *Ciris* compares with his predecessors in his attitude towards the morbid; but he does not appear to take pleasure in it for its own sake. Nor does his psychological interest betray him into unreality. His Scylla, granting the situation, acts and speaks naturally. She is very different from Ovid's guilty heroines, who reason out every action and analyse the smallest details of their feelings and motives.

The style is curiously uneven. Some passages are simple and graceful with occasional touches of great beauty; others are intolerably cumbrous and obscure.¹ This unevenness, together with the inconsistencies already noticed, suggests that the author was a rapid and some-

¹ The poem abounds in the involved parentheses which are a marked characteristic of Alexandrian style. Cf. the opening lines of the Acontius and Cydippe fragment of the *Aitia* of Callimachus.

The Ciris

what careless writer.¹ A true follower of Euphron, he paraded his learning, never neglecting an opportunity of dragging in an obscure allusion. He adopted the fashion of using spondaic endings, but with more moderation than Catullus. In spite of his faults, which seem, indeed, to be as much the product of his school as the result of his own deficiencies, he undoubtedly possessed considerable power and imagination.

The *Ciris*, if not the work of Gallus himself, certainly represents his school. It has already been pointed out that Parthenius throws some light on the methods of that school, and further evidence may be obtained from Vergil's sixth Eclogue.

If Professor Skutsch is correct in supposing that the sixth Eclogue contains a list of Gallus' epyllia,² it is obviously of enormous importance, since it gives us the subjects of his poems, for which there is no other evidence. But whether this theory be adopted or not, it is clear that Vergil, in the song of Silenus, gives a list of epyllion subjects; the song is, in fact, like the song of Orpheus in the tenth Book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,³ a collection of epyllia. The subjects are naturally of the type preferred at the time, and are therefore of

¹ The facts are here strongly in favour of the authorship of Gallus. Quintilian (x., 1, 93) gives him the epithet of "*durior*" which suits well the carelessness and obscurity of the *Ciris*. That he wrote rapidly is clear from the fact that he was at the height of his fame both as epic and elegiac poet when Vergil was still writing the *Eclogues*. Cf. Skutsch. *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*, p. 47.

² *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*, C. II. His arguments need not be recapitulated here. His position is a very strong one both for the sixth and the tenth Eclogues, since no other explanation will give them coherence.

³ *Met.*, x., 148-739. The subjects are Ganymede, Hyacinthus, the Cerastæ, the Propœtides, Pygmalion, Myrrha, Adonis, Atalanta.

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great interest whether they represent actual epyllia or not.

The sixth Eclogue is in itself an epyllion, and, though its pastoral nature makes it idyllic rather than narrative, its composition brings it into close relation with the school of Gallus. There is a short dedication to Varus, written in an allusive style.¹ The main subject² is a charming idyll, in which two Satyrs find Silenus sleeping and bind him; he offers them a song as his ransom; the digression, which occupies the rest of the poem, is the song of Silenus, and is epic rather than idyllic in character, thus giving the contrast required by epyllion technique. The main subject is resumed very briefly in the last three lines, which serve to link up the song with its setting.

The digression is the most important part of the sixth Eclogue. The subjects included in the song of Silenus are the following: the Creation, Deucalion, Hylas, Pasiphae, Atalanta, the Sisters of Phaethon, Gallus, Scylla, Philomela, Hyacinthus. These are all epyllion subjects and all except Pasiphae and Gallus actually occur as epyllia in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Hylas and Hyacinthus can be traced to definitely known sources in Greek epyllion; the Grynean grove, which is part of the Gallus subject, is from Euphorion.³ We have no means of knowing whether any of the others had been used

¹ Verg., *Ecl.*, vi., 1-12.

² Verg., *Ecl.*, vi., 13-30. Short as it is, the sixth Eclogue exemplifies the technique of the Vergilian epyllion as shown in the *Culex* and the *Aristaus*. There is a long digression with a short resumption of the main subject. The main subject is idyllic, the digression epic. The digression contains the climax of the poem. See Note III. The *Culex* and the *Aristaus*.

³ Serv. *ad* Verg., *Ecl.*, vi., 72.

The Ciris

in Greek epyllion. Six are love stories, three of them, Scylla, Pasiphae and Philomela, being of the sensational type. At least five contain metamorphoses.¹ All except the Creation² are of one or another of the popular Alexandrian types.

Professor Skutsch has pointed out that not only the subjects but the treatment, where it is indicated, suggest epyllion. In fact it is almost impossible to suppose that in the Pasiphae and Gallus sections Vergil was not referring to actual epyllia. In both instances the construction is indicated and is typical; if Vergil was not following definite originals, he had certainly planned these two epyllia in imagination.³

The Pasiphae epyllion⁴ would be of the same type as the *Ciris*. The main subject is the love of Pasiphae; this is interrupted by a digression, apparently given in the form of a reflection by the author on the daughters of Prætus, a subject which, like that of the *Ciris* digression, exhibits both a parallel and a contrast in relation to the main subject. The story of Pasiphae is then resumed, and includes a speech by the heroine; this speech no doubt indicates the usual formal lament.

The Gallus section⁵ may indicate an epyllion on the

¹ Deucalion, the Sisters of Phaethon, Scylla, Philomela, Hyacinthus; perhaps also Atalanta, if her whole story is intended, and not merely the account of the race.

² In the *Argonautica*, however, Orpheus sings of the creation. Ap. Rh., *Arg.*, i., 496-511.

³ The mention of Prometheus in connection with Deucalion may indicate a digression; the main subject would be the flood and metamorphosis of the stones. The theft and punishment of Prometheus might serve as a digression.

⁴ Verg., *Ecl.*, vi., 45-60.

⁵ Verg., *Ecl.*, vi., 64-73.

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Grynean grove with an introduction on Gallus, or one in which the adventures of Gallus were the main subject and the Grynean grove the digression. Either treatment would fulfil the conditions required by the form. Servius states that Euphorion's account of the Grynean grove was translated by Gallus,¹ so that, if we recognise here a summary of that translation, we may perhaps assume that Gallus added an introduction of his own to Euphorion's poem.

We have, then, two obvious summaries of epyllia; there can be no doubt that Vergil had the form in mind. The choice lies between supposing that he was reproducing actual epyllia and that he planned epyllia in imagination and then summarised them. The second alternative seems unlikely, and it is far easier to adopt the first with Professor Skutsch, whose further conclusion that these are the epyllia of Gallus himself then becomes almost a necessity.

The sixth Eclogue and the *Ciris* between them represent the culmination of the epyllion of Euphorion. The majority of Gallus' epyllia were probably of this type. The form seems to have been completely stereotyped, and probably the most typical examples of this school would show an introduction with a dedication, a main subject, a digression affording a contrast and a passage containing a formal lament; all these are present in the *Ciris*, and we may assume that they were regularly to be found in the love-stories, which were preferred by this school. Epyllia, which were not love-stories, would

¹ Serv. *ad. Verg., Ecl.*, vi. 72. After giving the story he says: "Hoc autem Euphorionis continent carmina quæ Gallus transtulit in sermonem Latinum."

The *Ciris*

not show the form so well, but in any case they could not be regarded as typical, since the collection of Parthenius makes it quite clear that the epyllion at this date was primarily conceived as a love-story. The story should be tragic and sensational if possible; preferably it should have a heroine on whom the psychological interest may be concentrated. Finally the style must be allusive, and the author must display his learning by introducing references to as many strange customs and unknown myths as possible.

Hampered by so many artificial restrictions, the epyllion of this period seems to have had little appeal outside its own age. The *Ciris* is its sole extant representative, and probably shows the type at its best. Gallus, the chief poet of the school, was remembered not for his epyllia but for his elegies. A form so much restricted must necessarily disappear, as soon as the fashion changed; accordingly we find in the last and greatest examples modifications and innovations, which might have given a new lease of life to the epyllion but for the triumph of the Vergilian Epic.

IX

THE ARISTÆUS OF VERGIL

THE story of Aristæus, which closes the fourth Georgic, is the most beautiful of the Latin epyllia. Embodying, as it does, Vergil's most finished work in the epic style, it has at once the technical perfection, which the *Peleus and Thetis* lacks, and the poetic beauty of Vergil's greatest period. So direct is the narrative and so great the charm that it is almost a shock to the critic to discover that it is constructed on the lines of the formal epyllion, and is a genuine product of Alexandria. It is, in fact, an Alexandrian epyllion transfigured by that undefinable quality which constitutes the genius of Vergil.

Vergil's method of dealing with his literary sources is a very interesting one. It has often been misunderstood, especially by his earlier critics, who complained that he plagiarised from Homer and others. It is true that Vergil always borrowed his form and frequently his matter, but in most instances he transformed his borrowings by an extremely subtle process of change. Even the actual words of another poet by this process become Vergil's own, and he has created new literary types, while closely conforming to rules laid down by his predecessors. Thus the form of the Vergilian epic is based on that of the Homeric epic with the modifications introduced by Apollonius; and the Vergilian epyllion preserves the form preferred by the school

The *Aristæus* of Vergil

of Gallus. It follows, then, that a close study of the *Aristæus* as a formal epyllion reveals many characteristics both of Vergil's method and of his genius.

The history and date of the *Aristæus* are known from two statements of Servius. In his introduction to the tenth Eclogue he says: "Gallus . . . fuit autem amicus Vergilii adeo, ut quartus Georgicorum a medio usque ad finem eius laudes teneret: quas postea iubente Augusto in Aristæi fabulam commutavit"; and in the introduction to the fourth Georgic: "Sane sciendum, ut supra diximus, ultimam partem huius libri esse mutatam: nam laudes Galli habuit locus ille, qui nunc Orpheï continet fabulam, quæ inserta est, postquam irato Augusto Gallus occisus est."¹ Thus the *Aristæus* was written after the death of Gallus in 26 B.C. and was probably published in 26 or 25 B.C., since the offending passage was probably withdrawn immediately, and there was every reason for hastening on the publication of the revised version. By this date Vergil had mastered the difficulties of epic construction and was probably engaged on the great books of the first half of the *Æneid*. He must have returned to the epyllion with a sense of ease and mastery.

We know nothing of the original ending of the fourth Georgic. It must have been very effectively suppressed, since no line of it has come down to us, and the only hint is the vague "*laudes Galli*" of Servius. But it may be conjectured that the poem always closed with an

¹ Attempts have been made to discredit these statements, but no sound objection can be made to them. Professor Skutsch refutes the arguments against them in *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*, Excursus III.

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epyllion, and that the original epyllion contained the exploits of Gallus.

It is clear that the length of the fourth Georgic was not altered to any extent, for the *Georgics* do not vary very much in the number of lines. Even if the fourth was originally as short as the first, the rejected passage must have consisted of two hundred lines, which is quite long enough for an epyllion. It would be a delicate compliment to Gallus to use the form in celebrating his praises, for it was a form to which he had particularly devoted himself. "*Laudes Galli*" might easily serve as a description of an epyllion which narrated his successes in Egypt.

The character of the epyllion, if it was an epyllion, cannot be discovered. It may have been simply a narrative about Gallus without any recognised characteristics of the form; or there may have been a second subject either as a digression or introduction. It is not impossible to suppose that the incident of Aristæus and Proteus was part of the original ending, though necessarily in shorter form. Cyrene is a Libyan nymph, and Proteus an Egyptian god; the scene of the meeting with Proteus would, therefore, naturally be the Egyptian coast, where Menelaus meets him in the *Odyssey*. Vergil, indeed, has to explain his presence in Greece:

"Hic nunc Emathiæ portus patriamque revisit
Pallenen."¹

There is no difficulty in supposing an epyllion in which actual persons were associated with legendary ones, for the association actually occurs in the sixth and tenth

¹ *Georg.*, iv., 390-391.

The Aristæus of Vergil

Eclogues, and may have occurred in the works of Gallus himself.¹ The statement of Servius, "Quas in Aristæi fabulam commutavit." need not conflict with this view, since the story of Aristæus could only have occupied an unimportant position. Elsewhere Servius says that the story of Orpheus was inserted in place of the old ending, and it is clear that the Orpheus digression can have had no part in the original.

The whole question depends on the insoluble problem of the paragraph which precedes the epyllion. It is generally agreed that the description of Egypt, which now seems pointless, originally served as a connecting link between the two parts of the poem. Professor Skutsch² supposes that the opening lines of this paragraph were altered when the *Georgic* was revised. The passage, as it now stands, is as follows:

"Sed si quem proles subito defecerit omnis,
Nec genus unde novæ stirpis revocetur habebit,
Tempus et Arcadii memoranda inventa magistri
Pandere, quoque modo cæsis iam sæpe iuvençis
Insincerus apes tulerit cruor. Altius omnem
Expeditam prima repetens ab origine famam."³

These lines are followed by the statement that the whole of Egypt practises the method of propagating bees by means of a bullock's carcass. Professor Skutsch holds that the whole passage is original except the third, fourth and fifth of the lines just quoted. If this view is adopted the whole of the present epyllion must have been added. But there is some difficulty in supposing that Vergil, if he altered the passage at all,

¹ Cf. *Ecl.*, vi., 64-73.

² *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*, Excursus III.

³ *Georg.*, iv., 281-286.

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would not have altered it a little more and suppressed all reference to Egypt. If, on the other hand, we accept the whole passage as part of the original form, we must assume the story of Aristæus also. It is a tempting theory that the story of the consultation of Proteus was used as a short introduction, and that a long digression in the form of a prophecy by Proteus told the story of Gallus. This would be quite in keeping with the methods of the epyllion writers; but the evidence is far too slight to warrant the adoption of any theory; the whole subject must remain a matter for speculation.

The story of Aristæus is too well known to need more than the briefest summary. Aristæus, having lost his bees by disease, appeals to his mother Cyrene. She tells him how to capture Proteus, who knows everything and can give him counsel. Proteus reveals that the anger of the spirit of Orpheus is the cause, since Orpheus is exacting vengeance for the death of his wife Eurydice. Then follows the familiar story of Orpheus' descent into the underworld, the second loss of Eurydice and the death of Orpheus. Finally Cyrene tells Aristæus of the propitiatory sacrifice, which is to produce the new swarm.

The main outline of this story appears to be Vergil's own. No doubt a tradition was in existence that this method of propagating bees was discovered by Aristæus; but it is fairly safe to assume that it was Vergil who turned it into a story and added the Proteus incident, since we have no earlier allusion to any such legend. The association of Aristæus with the death of Eurydice also seems to be Vergil's. His epic method is demonstrated as clearly here as in the *Æneid*; he can

The Aristæus of Vergil

construct a story out of the slightest material, and he has no scruples about welding together legends not originally connected.

Cyrene and Aristæus appear first in Pindar, who in the ninth Pythian Ode tells of Apollo's love for Cyrene and makes Cheiron prophesy the birth of Aristæus.¹ Apollonius also has the story in a shorter form.² From Diodorus Siculus we have an account of the travels and discoveries of Aristæus.³ Proteus is taken from the *Odyssey*, and Vergil has followed Homer closely in many points. The whole of the main subject therefore can be ultimately traced to pre-Alexandrian sources.

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice, on the other hand, appears to be late. Vergil's version does not occur in any extant Greek source. The earliest mention of the wife of Orpheus is in Plato's *Symposium*, where the story is given as follows: Ὀρφέα δὲ τὸν Οἰάγρου ἀτελῇ ἀπέπεμψαν ἐξ Ἄιδου, φάσμα δείξαντες τῆς γυναικὸς ἐφ' ἣν ἦκεν, αὐτὴν δὲ οὐ δόντες, ὅτι μαλθακίξεσθαι ἐδόκει, ἅτε ὦν καθαρωδός, καὶ οὐ τολμᾶν ἔνεκα τοῦ ἔρωτος ἀποθνήσκειν ὥσπερ Ἀλκιστис, ἀλλὰ διαμηχανᾶσθαι ζῶν εἰσιέναι εἰς Ἄιδου. τοιγάρτοι διὰ ταῦτα δίκην αὐτῷ ἐπέθεσαν, καὶ ἐποίησαν τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ γυναικῶν γενέσθαι.⁴ It is not clear from this account whether Orpheus entered Hades or not. It is expressly stated that his wife was not given back to him, and further that his death at the hands of women was a punishment for cowardice. His wife is not named.

Euripides appears to refer to the story in the *Alcestis*:

¹ *Pyth.*, ix., 5 ff.

³ *Diod. Sic.*, iv., 81.

² *Ap. Rh., Arg.*, ii., 500 ff.

⁴ *Plato, Sympos.*, 179, D.

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εἰ δ' Ὀρφέως μοι γλῶσσα καὶ μέλος παρῆν,
ὥστ' ἢ κόρην Δήμητρος ἢ κείνης πόσιν
ὕμνοισι κηλήσαντά σ' ἐξ Ἄιδου λαβεῖν,
κατήλθον ἄν, καί μ, οὔθ' ὁ Πλούτωνος κύων
οὔθ' οὐπὶ κώπη ψυχοπομπὸς ἄν Χάρων
ἔσχον, πρὶν ἐς φῶς σὸν καταστήσαι βίον.¹

These lines seem to imply a visit of Orpheus to Hades, and suggest that he went in search of his wife, but no details are indicated.

The earliest positive statement of the story is found in a long fragment of Hermesianax dealing with the loves of poets and philosophers.² Here the wife of Orpheus is called Argiope and it is recorded that Orpheus brought her back from Hades:

οἶν μὲν φίλος υἱὸς ἀνήγαγεν Οἰάγροιο
Ἄργιόπην Θρηῆσαν στεϊλάμενος κιθάρην
Ἄιδόθεν . . .

ἔνθεν ἀοιδιάων μεγάλους ἀνέπεισεν ἄνακτας
Ἄργιόπην μαλακοῦ πνεῦμα λαβεῖν βίотου.

There is no trace of a second loss of Argiope.

A fragment of Phanocles³ gives the story of the death of Orpheus at the hands of the Thracian women. There is no mention of his wife, and the motive of the murder is vengeance for his despising women and setting his affections on Calais.

The latest pre-Vergilian reference to the story is found in the *Lament for Bion*; here first appears the name Eurydice:

¹ Eur., *Alc.*, 357-362.

² *Collectanea Alexandrina*. Hermes., fr. 7, 1-14.

³ *Collectanea Alexandrina*. Phan., fr. 1.

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καὶ κείνα Σικελὰ καὶ ἐν Αἰτναίαισιν ἔπαιζεν
αἰόσων· μέλος οἶδε τὸ Δώριον· οὐκ ἀγέραςτος
ἔσσειθ' ἅ μολπά, χῶς Ὀρφεὶ πρόσθεν ἔδωκεν
ἀδέα φορμίζοντι παλίσσυτον Εὐρυδίκειαν,
καὶ σὲ Βίων πέμψει τοῖς ὥρεσιν.¹

Here clearly Eurydice is restored to life. If Moschus is really the author of the poem the later version of the story containing the second loss of Eurydice must be ascribed to the period between Moschus at the end of the second century B.C. and the writing of the *Culex*, where the Vergilian story appears for the first time. If, however, as is more probable, Bion was later than Moschus, and the *Lament* must consequently be ascribed to the time of Sulla,² the additions must have been made less than thirty years before the *Culex* was written.³

It would seem, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, that in the earlier form of the legend Orpheus went to Hades to win back his wife and succeeded in restoring her to life. Plato seems to imply a variant in which he made the attempt, but was deceived by a phantom, but Plato's evidence, when unsupported, is not altogether trustworthy. If such a variant existed it evidently did not agree with Vergil's account of the traditional restoration and second loss. Nearly all authors agree that Orpheus was murdered by women,⁴

¹ Mosch., iii., 121-125.

² See pp. 67-68.

³ It is, of course, possible that the legend existed in two forms, but, if the Vergilian version is an old variant, it is curious that there is no early reference to it.

⁴ Pausanias (ix., 30, 6) quotes a variant, that he killed himself out of sorrow for Eurydice.

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but the causes of his death are variously given. Vergil makes the motive vengeance for his devotion to the lost Eurydice, but this cannot agree with the earlier version, and is perhaps Vergil's own contribution.

We have no means of knowing the date and source of the insertion of Pluto's condition and the second loss. From the fact that it occurs in the *Culex* it is probable that Vergil was not himself responsible. In later years he was to make many innovations in the legends which he used, but we can hardly suppose that in the *Culex* he did more than adopt existing forms. It has been pointed out that the adoption of the new version must lie somewhere between the *Lament for Bion* and the *Culex*; speculation on its author is useless. Its importance lies in the fact that here, as in the *Ciris*, the original tradition has been expanded by means of an incident which occurs very widely as a folk-tale motive. The heroine under a spell, who may be rescued if the hero observes a certain condition, is a common figure in fairy tales. The condition is frequently the prohibition of some act, for example, speaking or tasting food; and the command not to look back occurs in several variants. Thus we find again in Vergil's story of Orpheus and Eurydice the fusion of three elements, tradition centring round a semi-historical person, love romance and folk-tale.¹

The *Aristæus* conforms to the custom of nearly all the

¹ The sources, as far as can be traced, may be summed up as follows:
Cyrene and Aristæus: Pindar, *Pyth.*, ix., 5 ff. Ap. Rh., *Arg.*, ii., 500 ff.
Proteus., *Od.*, iv., 384 ff.

Orpheus and Eurydice: uncertain; later than Hermesianax.

Death of Orpheus: Phanocles, fr. 1.

The general outline appears to be Vergil's.

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extant epyllia in possessing a digression which can be completely separated from the main subject. The connection between the two parts is better established than in those epyllia where the digression is introduced by a purely artificial device, but after the first few lines Aristæus and his troubles pass from the reader's mind altogether. Thus in considering the details of the poem it is convenient to deal with the two parts separately.

The opening is characteristically abrupt; we plunge at once into the story without preliminary explanations. Here Vergil's superiority of technique is at once observed. There is the same plunge into the midst of Scylla's story at line 129 of the *Ciris*, but, whereas the author of the *Ciris* takes 34 lines to convey Scylla's previous history and then leaves it obscure, Vergil makes the whole position clear in nine lines. The motive of the whole action is given in one line:

"Amisissis, ut fama, apibus morboque fameque;"¹

and Aristæus explains who he is and introduces Cyrene in the first five lines of his speech; nor is there any suggestion that he is giving information merely for the reader's benefit:

"Mater, Cyrene mater, quæ gurgitis huius
Ima tenes, quid me præclara stirpe deorum,
Si modo, quem perhibes, pater est Thymbræus Apollo,
Invisum fatis genuisti? aut quo tibi nostri
Pulsus amor? quid me cælum sperare iubebas?"²

Cyrene is sitting with the other nymphs under the stream; the list of names is an excellent example of Vergil's power of choosing words; the picture too is

¹ *Georg.*, iv. 318.

² *Georg.*, iv. 321-325.

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very vivid, though the utmost economy of detail is used. The passage is distinctly Alexandrian in tone with its string of proper names and its Greek rhythms.¹ The nymphs too, like true Alexandrians, are amused by listening to stories of the loves of the gods. Even more characteristically Alexandrian is the list of rivers, reminding us of the geographical passages which occur so frequently in the *Argonautica*.

In the reception of Aristæus and the rites and speech of Cyrene the narrative and dramatic form is used, but the general treatment is idyllic rather than epic. Vergil cannot at any time help making vivid pictures, but here the narrative is rapid, and the descriptive passages are stressed. The climax of the first part is reached in the wonderful description of the cavern where Proteus shelters his herds from the midday heat. The scene is shown with true Alexandrian realism of detail, and strongly suggests the method of Theocritean epyllion. Throughout this part of the poem, where speeches are introduced, they are used to advance the narrative and have little or no dramatic value.

The first few lines of Proteus' speech belong to the main subject, the digression proper beginning at line 460. Proteus merely tells Aristæus the cause of his misfortunes, leaving Cyrene to devise the remedy. In resuming the main theme, Vergil, as in the *Culex*, gives a brief narrative only; Cyrene prescribes a sacrifice; Aristæus carries out her commands; and the happy ending is shown in a few lines. The tone of the whole conclusion is quiet and there is no elaboration; nothing

¹ The scene is actually imitated from Homer, *Il.*, xviii., 35 ff, but the tone is not Homeric.

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is introduced which might disturb the effect of the tragedy which precedes it.

The story of Aristæus is a narrative idyll like *Heracles the Lion Slayer*. Its pastoral setting marks it out for idyllic treatment, and though Vergil uses a more definitely narrative form than Theocritus or Catullus, it is always rather for its pictures than its plot that the reader returns to it. The nymphs seated on their green seats spinning the green wool and listening to the story-teller; Arethusa with her golden head appearing above the waters; the caverns and rocky palace beneath the river; the scorching heat of midsummer

“cum sol accenderit æstus,
Cum sitiunt herbæ, et pecori iam gratior umbra est;”¹

above all, Proteus with his herds in the cave: these scenes, conveyed with all Vergil's mastery over metre and language, impress the reader and remain in his memory far more than the somewhat shadowy hero and his mother.

The digression forms a contrast. It is not that pictures are lacking; they are as vivid and beautiful as in the earlier part. But the main interest centres on the plot and characters. Orpheus and Eurydice are not mere figures in a landscape; they are human beings whose tragedy touches us personally. There is only one speech, that of Eurydice as she vanishes, but that one is pure drama. Thus the digression obeys the convention which requires a contrast of style in the two parts of the epyllion.

The convention of a contrast and yet a parallel in subject is also observed. The main subject is the story of

¹ *Georg.*, iv. 401-2.

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a loss, which is ultimately made good. The digression tells of loss without recovery, the pathos being heightened by the frustrated restoration of Eurydice. Underlying the pathos is the moral, characteristic of many of Vergil's tragic stories, that the consequences of guilt fall most heavily on innocent people. Aristæus, who is responsible for the whole tragedy, ultimately recovers his bees; for Orpheus and Eurydice there is no recovery.

There is perhaps no better means of estimating at once Vergil's debt to the Alexandrian method and his superiority to it, than by comparing his treatment of the story with Ovid's.¹ Following his usual practice Ovid does not alter the outline of the story, but modifies the details. In keeping closely to Vergil's account he has been obliged, in order to avoid giving a mere repetition, to lengthen the incidents which Vergil only mentions, and to shorten those which Vergil gives in detail. The result is that he has produced a version, which is much nearer the spirit of the Alexandrian epyllion than Vergil's is; for while Vergil uses the Alexandrian form, the spirit is his own.

Both poets begin with the death of Eurydice. Ovid here does not accept Vergil's innovation of making Aristæus the cause; he also omits any mention of the mourning for Eurydice. Vergil on the other hand enlarges upon it; his reference to the lamentations of Thrace is full of proper names and allusions, but the lines are so beautiful in themselves, that the uninstructed reader does not pause to enquire about their geography or mythology. The descent of Orpheus is

¹ *Met.*, x., 1-xi., 84.

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again told fully by Vergil with a foreshadowing of the coming tragedy in the lines:

"Manisque adiit regemque tremendum,
Nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda."¹

Ovid devotes five lines to it, and passes on to an incident which Vergil omits altogether, the address of Orpheus to the rulers of the underworld, and their granting of his prayer. Here Ovid suffers from the necessity of taking what Vergil left, for Vergil evidently realised the difficulty of making the address convincing, and availed himself of the Alexandrian's privilege of leaving out essential scenes. He does not, however, adopt the accompanying fault of obscurity. Three lines of allusion suffice to make the missing scene clear:

"Iamque pedem referens casus evaserat omnis,
Redditaque Eurydice superas veniebat ad auras,
Pone sequens, namque hanc dederat Proserpina legem."²

Ovid's scene is a good piece of writing, neither better nor worse than a great deal of his work, but the song of Orpheus suffers from its prosaic opening statement that he has not come merely as a sightseer. Both poets show the effects of the song, Ovid here imitating and enlarging upon Vergil; the reader can unhesitatingly accept Vergil's statement because the omission of the song calls his imagination into play; but Ovid's does not quite carry conviction. Brilliant as the passage is, he is not sufficiently a master of pathos to succeed where Vergil had not ventured. Here, as often, Vergil is as great in what he omits as in what he tells.

Vergil concentrates on the return and the loss of

¹ *Georg.*, iv. 469-470.

² *Georg.*, iv. 485-487.

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Eurydice: Ovid hurries over it, and wisely, for he could not hope to equal Vergil. He does to a certain extent secure pathos, but the effect is weakened by his attempt to describe the stupefaction of Orpheus, who is compared to three obscure persons who were turned into stone. Again he has little to say of the grief of Orpheus, for here too Vergil describes fully, and the whole passage is so magnificent that it was the better part to avoid any possibility of comparison. In comparing the treatment it may be noted that Ovid is markedly Alexandrian in his method; the language tends to be elaborate, and the allusions obscure. Vergil on the other hand is absolutely simple. There is no straining for effect, no obscure allusion; and it is an interesting point that in the famous simile of the mourning nightingale, the picture represents the bird lamenting for her nestlings. Even Ovid here would probably have made her lament for Itys;¹ certainly the average Alexandrian would not have resisted the temptation of alluding to the more unpleasant details of Philomela's story. Vergil too, represents Orpheus as faithful to the memory of Eurydice; Ovid hints at the transference of his affections to Calais, a point, which, no doubt, he borrowed from Phanocles.

Ovid at this point enters upon a long digression, or rather a series of digressions. As often happens in the *Metamorphoses*, the digression is lengthened out of all proportion, and its various parts must be regarded as separate epyllia. As Ovid is solely concerned with telling the stories, he does not attempt to make them appro-

¹ The simile occurs in Homer and Sophocles; in both instances the nightingale mourns for Itys.

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priate to the situation of Orpheus himself. Vergil, of course, has no digression.

The death of Orpheus, again, with its horrible circumstances, would be an excellent opportunity for a follower of Euphorion and Parthenius. Vergil gives it two and a half lines, and draws the reader's attention from it by the poetry of the last lines, where the name of Eurydice comes like a monotonous refrain. Ovid describes the scene with some fulness, though he does not dwell upon the details. His description of the mourning of all nature for Orpheus, and of the head of Orpheus floating down the Hebrus, with the final reunion of husband and wife, are perhaps the best part of the story; but it must be admitted that they gain some of their charm from the Vergilian echoes.¹

In admitting that Vergil is throughout superior to Ovid, it would be distinctly unjust to blame Ovid for not writing a poem that Vergil might have written. Ovid was not attempting to write a better poem than Vergil, but to tell the story in a different way, and he has succeeded remarkably well. The importance of the comparison lies in the fact that Ovid, in avoiding Vergil's material and dwelling on his omissions, has produced the typical Alexandrian epyllion, while Vergil, though using the Alexandrian form and many of the usual devices, has risen completely superior to the Alexandrians; in fact, where he is at his best, he owes least to Alexandria.

Thus the Vergilian epyllion is something new. The form indeed remains unchanged; there is the combina-

¹ Cf. *Met.*, xi. 44-49. *Georg.*, iv. 460-466. *Met.*, xi. 50-53. *Georg.*, iv. 523-527.

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tion of main subject and digression with the customary contrasts and parallels carefully worked out; there is the atmosphere of magic and romance; there is a tragic love-story and a violent death; there is some allusion and a constant use of proper names; but the faults of taste—obscurity, pedantry, delight in morbid details—are entirely absent. It is as if Vergil had issued a challenge to the followers of Euphoriion; he proves that within the narrow limits of the prescribed form a great poem can be produced. He has eliminated all false realism and given us genuine romance; yet his romance, as always, retains the human appeal through its depth of pathos.

We owe the *Aristæus* to the disgrace and death of Gallus. But though the name of Gallus has disappeared from the poem, it can hardly be maintained that he was absent from Vergil's thought. The sense of loss which pervades the Orpheus episode, conveys something more than mere feeling for a pathetic story; Vergil's own experience is behind it. The loss of Gallus was recent, and must have been present in Vergil's mind, as he rewrote the poem. Thus the *Aristæus* remains a memorial of Gallus, and no doubt a far finer one than the original ending of the Georgic. When Orpheus mourns for Eurydice,

"Qualis populea mærens philomela sub umbra
Amisos queritur fetus, quos durus arator
Observans nido inplumis detraxit; at illa
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
Integrat, et mæstis late loca questibus implet,"¹

it may well be that Vergil himself is mourning for his lost friend.

¹ *Georg.*, iv., 511-515.

X

THE METAMORPHOSES OF OVID

I. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE POEM¹

THE *Metamorphoses* of Ovid is, in its way, one of the most remarkable poems ever written. It cannot, perhaps, be ranked among the greatest poems of the world, nor is it even the finest achievement of its author; but it possesses a brilliance of narrative and construction which has always attracted a large number of readers, and has made it a wide and lasting influence in European literature.

The question of the sources of Ovid's material is too large to be treated as a whole here. It is, moreover, a question which is not capable of satisfactory settlement. In a few instances the source of the story can be certainly traced; for example, the tale of Circe in the fourteenth Book is clearly taken from the *Odyssey*, and the outline of the adventures of Æneas is a careful and accurate summary of the *Æneid*; but in the majority of

¹ Lafaye has dealt exhaustively with the sources and construction of the *Metamorphoses* in his book: *Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide et leurs modèles grecs*. (Bibliothèque de la Faculté des Lettres. No. xix. Paris. 1904.) For Ovid's debt to the Alexandrian elegists and catalogue poets see L. Castiglioni: *Studi intorno alle Metamorfosi di Ovidio*. Part III. (Annali della R. Scuola Normale superiore di Pisa. Vol. XX. Pisa. 1907.) Lafaye remarks the epyllion character of the longer tales, but not the influence of the epyllion on the general construction. Castiglioni regards the construction as derived definitely from the Alexandrian Catalogues.

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cases the source cannot be determined, nor is it possible, where the story is known to have existed in several earlier versions, to conjecture with any certainty to which of these Ovid's version is due. We know, for instance, that the story of Andromeda was the subject of a lost play of Euripides, and also of a Greek hymn or epyllion of the Alexandrian age.¹ Was Ovid's source either or both of these? Or was there a further source of which nothing is known? It can hardly be doubted that Ovid had read Euripides, so that here it is a reasonable conjecture that Ovid knew the story from Euripides; but he may have borrowed from other sources.² The question becomes far more complicated with regard to the less known tales and incidents, in which the poem abounds. It has been suggested that Ovid used the catalogues of his predecessors, such as the *Metamorphoses* of Parthenius, and the various collections of myths which are known to have existed. But he must obviously have drawn on a considerable knowledge of mythology and legend, which had its origin in wide reading and a retentive memory. It is probable that none of the stories are entirely his own invention, but that many details are invented and that the treatment is often, if not always, original. The source of the literary form is also a question which does not admit of any certain solution. Other writers,

¹ *New Chapters in Greek Literature*, p. 110.

² There were undoubtedly collections of myths of the type of the *Library* of Apollodorus. The *Library* cannot be dated with certainty, but Ovid may have known it. Presumably he knew the work of Pherecydes, who was one of the principal authorities of Apollodorus. Cf. Sir James Frazer's Introduction to the *Library* in the Loeb Classical Library.

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notably Nicander and Parthenius, had produced collections of Metamorphoses; we have also the record of a poem of Bœus entitled *Ornithogonia*, which appears to have been a collection of stories of men changed into birds.¹ Probably there were many such collections, but none of them are now extant, and nothing is known of their construction. It is clear, however, that the idea of such a collection did not originate with Ovid. But how far did he follow his predecessors in arrangement and construction? To obtain any answer to this question it is necessary first to consider what was Ovid's real purpose in writing the *Metamorphoses*, and what is the true basis of the construction.

The title, *Metamorphoses*, was intended by Ovid himself, although he does not actually use the Greek word with reference to the poem. Writing from his place of exile, he says,

"Sunt quoque mutatae, ter quinque volumina, formae,
Carmina de domini funere rapta sui."²

He also opens the *Metamorphoses* with a statement of the subject:

"In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
Corpora. Di, coeptis, nam vos mutastis et illas,
Adspirate meis, primaque ab origine mundi
Ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen."³

The title is, however, a purely artificial one. It is true that a metamorphosis of some kind is introduced in connection with each long story and that the minor incidents all deal with the same subject; but often the change is a mere accessory or pendant to a long and elaborate tale which is quite independent of any such

¹ *Collefanea Alexandrina*, pp. 24-25.

² *Tristia*, iii., 14, 19-20.

³ *Met.*, i., 1-4.

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incident. Thus the story of Phaethon contains no metamorphosis and is complete without the incidents of Phaethon's sisters and Cycnus, which are added at the end as a kind of excuse for including the story at all. So too the story of Meleager ends with a short paragraph describing the metamorphosis of his sisters. If Ovid was really making a collection of metamorphoses, there was no compulsion on him to include any stories which were unsuitable in subject. He might have elaborated many incidents which he has only mentioned and included others which he has not used at all. It is clear then that in constructing the poem Ovid did not feel himself bound by the title; its relation to the unity of the whole is purely artificial. The poem is not merely a catalogue of metamorphoses.

A further clue to the construction is furnished by the opening lines. Ovid invokes the gods to aid him in tracing the course of history from the beginning of the world to his own time. His conception, therefore, would appear to be a poem including all the tales of change of shape arranged in chronological order. Thus there would be sufficient reason for including tales, which were recognised parts of history, but did not primarily deal with metamorphoses.

But the unity, which might be secured by such an arrangement, is not present, since the chronology is difficult to follow and in places breaks down. In the second Book the link between the stories of Callisto and Coronis is made by a reference to Juno's peacock,

"Tam nuper pictis cæso pavonibus Argo
Quam tu nuper eras, cum candidus ante fuisses
Corve loquax."¹

¹ *Met.*, ii., 533-535.

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Thus the transformation of the raven seems to be referred to some previous time, which is not at all clear. Here a new series of events begins and runs on coherently to the end of the story of Perseus in Book V. After the transformation of Polydectes, Pallas leaves Seriphus and visits the Muses. A series of tales told by the Muses follows; these are undated. At their conclusion Pallas is reminded of Arachne, whom she visits and punishes. Again the chronological order is followed, with occasional breaks where stories of the past are recalled, through the story of Niobe to the legends of Athens. The Athenian kings and heroes form a background to a long series of stories, some fitting into the chronological order, others narrated by various characters and either undated, or dated only by the fact of their being experiences of the narrators. The battle between Achelous and Hercules leads to the battle between Nessus and Hercules and the tale of Deianeira. From the death of Hercules we pass through the narratives of Alcmena and Iole, which again interrupt the chronology, to the tale of the founding of Caunus in Book IX. A group of love romances follows; some of these are connected in time, but most of them form the song of Orpheus and are undated. The story of Midas leads on to Apollo's visit to Troy, and with the building of the walls we begin upon a traditional chronology, which Ovid's age regarded as more or less historical. This promptly conflicts with the previous chronology. In Book IX. Hercules dies and becomes a god; in Book XI. he is alive and sacks Troy. From this point the historical background is carefully preserved, though

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the progression of events is frequently broken by older stories.

From this brief summary it will be seen that the chronological arrangement is far too artificial to be the true basis of construction. The links are often weak and the constant interruptions destroy the illusion of a historical sequence. Thus, then, when Ovid says that his subject is the history of transformation and his arrangement is chronological, he is dealing only with the superficial aspect of the poem, for the transformation is frequently a mere incident, and the chronology is altogether too complicated for the casual reader. The main interest is in the stories themselves. The poem is a collection of tales told for their own sake and fitted into a purely conventional framework.

If we turn to the earlier catalogue poems which are still extant or of which we have any certain knowledge, we find that they are really based on a scheme of construction such as Ovid claims for the *Metamorphoses*; but the most cursory examination proves how little Ovid has in common with any of them. The Hesiodic catalogues of women are merely genealogies varied by occasional narratives; many of these narratives seem to have been of some length, but they appear to have been definitely connected with the heroines, and were probably in most cases the stories of their weddings.¹

¹ A long fragment deals with the winning of Atalanta, another with the wooing of Helen. (Loeb Classical Library, Hesiod. *Catalogues of Women and Eoia*, 14 and 68.) The *Shield* probably in its present form has been much expanded. The Argument states that lines 1-56 belong to the fourth Catalogue. These deal with the story of Alcmena and the birth of the twins.

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These catalogues no doubt supplied Ovid with stories, but there is no resemblance of treatment.

Another form of catalogue is represented by the *Alexandra* of Lycophron; this is a list of prophecies concerning the fates of the heroes who fought at Troy; the stories are no more than brief summaries and there are no true narratives at all. There were probably many catalogues of this type. Among them may be included the various catalogues of curses which were evidently popular with the Alexandrians. The *Ibis* of Ovid, based on the *Ibis* of Callimachus, is probably a good representative of the class; we hear also of an '*Apai*' of Mæro and an '*Apai*' of Euphorion. One of the longer fragments of Euphorion¹ almost certainly belongs to this poem and shows clearly the treatment of stories in catalogues of this type; each is contained in a few lines and consists of the barest summary of the main incidents. Obscurity of allusion and language appear to have been considered essential. Ovid owes something to this type in passages where he alludes to a number of incidents, but does not narrate them in full.² But obviously it has not influenced his construction as a whole. A third type is represented by the *Aitia* of Callimachus and the *Fastii* of Ovid.³ These are catalogues of ancient

¹ *Collectanea Alexandrina*, Euphorion, fr. 9.

² The most important of such passages is Medea's journey. *Met.*, vii., 350-401.

³ The *Fastii* is not a typical catalogue, since here, as elsewhere, Ovid largely develops the narrative element. Probably the *Aitia* had the same characteristic, though perhaps to a less degree. There is one long narrative fragment on the story of Acontius and Cydippe, but even the longer fragments do not reveal the general character of the poem. The *Aitia* certainly influenced Ovid, particularly in the *Fastii*, but we cannot tell how far the influence affected his construction.

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practices and observances, both religious and secular, with their causes. It may be noted that they are written in elegiac verse, a fact which suggests that the narrative passages are to be regarded as subordinate.¹ The main interest in these poems is ætiological, and the stories, though they are frequently of some length and elaboration, are used to explain the practices under discussion. Ætiology has its part in any collection of metamorphoses, as Castiglioni² points out, but it is not important in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

In all these poems the connecting link between the stories told or referred to is likeness of subject in some particular; none of them appears to have the chronological arrangement of the *Metamorphoses*. Lafaye³ may be right in supposing that Ovid was inspired by the Cyclic rather than by the catalogue poets, but it is possible that such poems as the *Mopsopia* of Euphorion had the legends arranged in chronological order. If so, the chronology was probably unimportant; catalogues of legends relating to one district possessed unity of place; it would be merely a convenience to give them in order of time.

So far, then, we can discover no earlier catalogue which has more than a superficial resemblance to the *Metamorphoses*. But there still remains the further question: did any earlier catalogues exist, which were actually collections of stories told for their own sake? To this question no certain answer is possible. There is some ground for supposing that the *Metamorphoses*

¹ See Note V. Narrative Elegy and Epyllion.

² Castiglioni, p. 10.

³ Lafaye, p. 78.

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of Nicander had an ætiological interest,¹ but it may or may not have been subordinate to the interest of the narrative. The *Ornithogonia* of Bœus was probably a collection of narratives, but this title suggests the typical learned catalogue. We have no evidence at all for the *Metamorphoses* of Parthenius; it is not even known whether he wrote in verse or in prose. It has already been pointed out that the work may have been a prose collection on the lines of the *Love Romances*. The most that can be said is that Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is not constructed on the model of any known catalogue poem; and whether he originated the form or not, it is not primarily based on the catalogue form.

The interest in the *Metamorphoses* is concentrated upon the stories, and especially upon the longer ones. There are many short episodes linked to the longer tales or forming part of the general scheme; these are often interesting, but they do not live in the memory. There are over fifty stories of considerable, though varying, length, which constitute the true material of the poem; and it is to the arrangement and treatment of these that we must look, in order to arrive at a true conception of the construction of the whole.

Each of these stories is a complete epyllion. About one-third of them show the formal construction of main story and digression. Every variety of treatment is included, except perhaps the purely picturesque. They might indeed have been published as a collection of unconnected epyllia, without any loss of interest.² In fact it is not at all unreasonable to suppose that

¹ Cf. Castiglioni Part III, C.II. Lafaye, p. 29.

² Cf. Lafaye, pp. 94-95.

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Ovid wrote many of them as separate epyllia and later devised the connecting system.

If these epyllia are examined in their relation to one another, it will be observed that there is a definite and somewhat complex arrangement, which sometimes coincides with, and sometimes is independent of, the chronological idea. They fall into well-marked groups, each group having a certain unity of subject. This unity is in some cases secured by likeness of subject in the stories included; in others the group deals with the legends of a city or a hero.

The whole poem falls into an introduction and three main divisions.¹ The introduction is a long epyllion containing the account of the creation and deluge, with the story of Lycaon as a digression.² This is a strictly formal epyllion on a subject which had possibly already been treated by Gallus in two epyllia.³

The first of the three divisions comprises tales in which the gods are the chief actors; the second the tales of mortal heroes and heroines; the third is chronological and deals with the stories based on historical or semi-historical tradition from the first sack of Troy to Ovid's own time. These divisions are nearly equal in length.⁴ It will be necessary to examine them in detail.

The tales of the gods fall into three groups. The first occupies the latter half of the first and the whole of

¹ See Note VI. Table of the Construction of the *Metamorphoses*.

² *Met.*, i., 1-451.

³ See pp. 173 ff. Vergil's language in the sixth Eclogue suggests that the *Creation* and *Deucalion* were separate poems. The *Deucalion* embraced the story of Prometheus, which Ovid does not include.

⁴ I. *Met.*, i., 452-vi., 420. 3836 lines.

II. *Met.*, vi., 421- xi., 193. 3774 lines.

III. *Met.*, xi., 194-xv., 879. 3927 lines.

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the second Books, and deals with the love-stories of the gods. There are six epyllia: Daphne; Io, with a digression on Syrinx; Phaethon; Callisto; Coronis, with a digression on the crow and Erichthonius; Aglauros. These are all love-stories except Phaethon, but Phaethon is linked to the others by the love of Apollo and Clymene. Four shorter episodes, the sisters of Phaethon, Cycnus, Ocyrrhoe and Battus, have no connection with the main theme. Another short episode, Europa, which is a love-story of Jupiter, serves as a link between the first and second groups.

The second group (iii.-iv., 606) comprises the stories of Cadmus and his family, particularly those connected with Bacchus. The epyllia are seven in number: Cadmus; Actæon; Semele; Narcissus, with a digression on Echo; Pentheus, with a digression on Acætes; the Minyeiades, with a triple digression containing the stories of Pyramus, Clytie and Salmacis; Ino. As shorter episodes we find a story of Teiresias, the companions of Ino, and the transformation of Cadmus and Harmonia, all in close connection with the main theme. The history of the house of Cadmus is twice broken, first by the tale of Narcissus and later by the stories told by the Minyeiades. These last, though used as a digression, are really equivalent to separate epyllia.

The link between the second and third groups is formed by the epyllion of Perseus¹ with its digression on Medusa. This leads to a collection of epyllia and episodes dealing with the revenges of the gods. (v., 250-vi., 420). There are only four epyllia: Ceres, with a digression on Arethusa; Arachne, with digressions

¹ *Met.*, iv., 607-v., 249.

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describing the pictures embroidered by Pallas and Arachne, including the foundation of Athens and various revenges and metamorphoses of the gods; Niobe; Latona and the rustics. Shorter episodes are: Pyreneus, the nine maidens, Marsyas, Pelops. The story of Ceres is not primarily one of vengeance, but includes several incidents which return to that theme. A few lines describing the mourning for Amphion serve as a very artificial link between this section and the next. This concludes the first great division of the *Metamorphoses*.

It will be clearly seen that these epyllia all deal primarily with the adventures of the gods. But careful consideration shows that their unity goes further than that. Each group, as has been shown, has its own unity of subject, but the three are very subtly linked together by the constant reiteration of two themes: the quarrels of Juppiter and Juno and the punishment of presumption. The first of these is very prominent in the first and second groups through the stories of Io, Callisto, Europa and Semele. In the second group it is interwoven with the second theme in the stories dealing with the vengeance of Bacchus on those who denied his divinity. In the third group vengeance is the prominent theme, but Juno's jealousy recurs in the story of Latona.

The second main division deals with tales of heroes and heroines. Here too the gods play a part, but usually a minor part. There are two groups: the first (vi., 421-ix., 100) is a long one, in which the stories are fitted into a framework of Attic legend. Most of them are not actually tales of Athens, but all are linked in some way

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with the Athenian princes, Pandion, Erechtheus, Cephalus, Ægeus and Theseus. The epyllia are: Procne and Philomela; Medea; the Myrmidons; Procris, with the tale of the dog Lælaps as a digression; Scylla; Dædalus, with a digression on Ariadne; Meleager; Philemon and Baucis; Erysichthon; Achelous and Hercules. There are various short episodes and link passages including Orithyia, Medea in Athens and Perdix. The connection of the epyllia with the Athenian framework varies considerably: Medea is introduced by the statement that the sons of Orithyia were among the Argonauts; Meleager by the presence of Theseus at the Calydonian boar-hunt. The stories told in the house of Achelous have, in themselves, no connection with Athens.

The link between the two groups is formed by the epyllion of the death of Hercules,¹ with the accompanying incident of the birth of Hercules and the short epyllion of Dryope. The true connection is secured by the continuance of the story of Hercules and the introduction of the theme of tragic love, but the ostensible link is a very artificial scene where the gods lament the old age of their favourites.

The second group (ix., 450-xi., 84) is a collection of love romances. There are three epyllia: Byblis; Iphis and Ianthe; Orpheus. The Orpheus has a very long digression, which actually consists of four separate epyllia: Hyacinthus; Pygmalion; Myrrha; Adonis; this last has itself a digression on Atalanta. The episodes are Cyparissus, Ganymede, the Cerastræ, the Propœtides and the Edonian women. All the epyllia are love-

¹ *Met.*, ix., 101-449.

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stories; most of them are tragic, and the theme of unnatural love is somewhat prominent. A purely artificial link introduces the epyllion of Midas.¹

The dominant theme of both groups in the second division is the love romance. In the first it is varied, the love interest being absent as in the Myrmidons, or secondary as in the Meleager; in the second it is almost universally present. The variety of plot and treatment is extraordinary. Some of Ovid's best work is to be found in these books; all the situations loved and worn out by the Alexandrian poets are here endowed with new life.

The third main division follows a more or less historical tradition. There are three groups, the first based on the Trojan Cycle, the second on the wanderings of Æneas, and the third on Roman legend. This division differs somewhat in construction from the other two; the chronological sequence is much clearer and less often broken, the long epyllia are fewer, and the framework is more developed. On the whole the historical background is shown in a series of short episodes, while the epyllia often digress from the main theme.

The Trojan group (xi., 194-xiii., 622) begins with short accounts of Laomedon's perjury, the first sack of Troy and the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. The interval between the first and second sacks is filled by two epyllia, Peleus and Ceyx, with a digression on Dædalion, and Alcyone. The episode of Æsacus brings the narrative back to Troy and the Greek expedition. Four epyllia follow: Cygnus; Cæneus, whose story is told by Nestor

¹ *Met.*, xi., 84-193.

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at a feast; the contest for the arms of Achilles; Hecuba. Episodes are Periclymenus and Memnon.

The second group (xiii., 623-xiv., 608) is based on the *Æneid*. It contains only three epyllia, all of which are digressions from the story of Æneas: these are Galatea; Scylla, with a digression on Glaucus; and Ulysses and Circe, with a digression on Picus. Ovid follows Vergil's narrative very closely, condensing it into a very brief summary, but expanding it by the addition of new incidents whenever the opportunity arises. Thus the visit to Delos includes the story of Anius and his daughters, and the mention of Scylla leads to the epyllia of Galatea and Scylla. At Cumæ, the Sibyl tells her own story to Æneas. At Caieta, Achæmenides comes across an old companion, Macareus, and the two exchange stories, Macareus providing the epyllion of Ulysses and Circe. The war with the Latins is briefly summarised, but the episodes of Diomedes and the ships of Æneas are given at some length. A few lines give the transformation of Æneas into a god.

The third group (xiv., 608-xv., 879) includes the legends of Alba and Rome. A short account of the Alban kings leads to the epyllion of Pomona, with a digression on Iphis and Anaxarete. Then follow the story of Romulus, the accession of Numa and the founding of Croton, all in the form of episodes. Here is inserted a very curious passage: Numa visits Croton and hears Pythagoras lecture; the lecture is given in full, and though it is in no sense an epyllion from the point of view of construction, it takes the place of one; that is to say, it is a long digression from the main theme, having exactly the same relation to the whole poem as, for

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example, the epyllia of Cæneus and Galatea. It contains, among various Pythagorean beliefs, an account of the marvellous changes wrought by natural means and includes a prophecy of the dominion of Rome. Episodes of Egeria, Hippolytus and Cipus lead on to the final epyllia, the bringing of Æsculapius to Italy, and the death and apotheosis of Julius Cæsar with the achievements of Augustus for a digression.

There is no doubt that the third division of the *Metamorphoses* is on the whole less interesting than the other two, especially in the groups dealing with Æneas and Rome. This is perhaps partly due to the restrictions imposed by dealing with an established tradition, which allowed of little variation. Ovid is generally at his best in these books when he is furthest from the main theme, as in the beautiful Alcyone, or the Galatea. But he is not necessarily hampered by tradition, for the debate of Ajax and Ulysses, which closely follows traditional lines, is among his finest passages. That the Æneas group should lack interest was perhaps inevitable; it was a bold attempt to use the story of the *Æneid*, and, though Ovid is extraordinarily skilful in avoiding comparison with Vergil, the reader has a sense of disappointment; much of it is good, but it is not good enough. Yet Ovid has constantly retold the stories of his predecessors and added new interest to them; why has he failed here?

It may be said that the Italian legends are less interesting and beautiful than the Greek. This is true, but it does not completely account for the drop in interest in the last books. It is only towards the end of the fourteenth Book that the legends become definitely Italian,

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and even here there is some admixture of Greek myth. Moreover, in the *Fasti* there are many passages which prove that Ovid could treat Italian legends with liveliness and charm; and Italian folk-lore probably gave plenty of scope for romantic or humorous narrative. Yet nearly half the fifteenth Book is occupied with the tedious lecture of Pythagoras, a passage which seems to have no particular interest or purpose.¹

The truth probably is that Ovid was tired of the *Metamorphoses*. He had planned the poem so as to include the death of Julius Cæsar, and felt that it must be finished; but the subject had lost its charm and the finishing was a painful process. That, at least, is the effect produced on the reader. Other causes no doubt contribute to this effect, but there is a loss of conviction which is not completely explained by the nature of the material.

It has been shown that the epyllia fall into groups, the

¹ Professor Slater in his *Ovid in the Metamorphoses* (Occasional Publications of the Classical Association. No. 1) suggests the possibility that the Pythagorean philosophy is the background of the whole poem, and that the lecture of Pythagoras is the culminating point to which the whole collection of transformations leads. There is little support for this theory and three points may be urged against it: that it is impossible to prove that the doctrines of Pythagoras influenced Ovid anywhere except in this passage, and that there is no definite preparation for its introduction: that the lecture, though containing beautiful passages, seems as a whole tedious and irrelevant: and that nothing which we know of Ovid's life or work would lead us to attribute to him any serious philosophy, much less the mystical ideas which belong to Pythagoreanism. It is not impossible that Ovid is parodying didactic poetry; the insistence on the theme of vegetarian meals, which was a stock joke against the Pythagoreans, is suspicious. It is the opening text, and the whole leads up to the conclusion:

“Perdite siqua nocent, verum hæc quoque perdite tantum:
Ora vacent epulis, alimenta que mitia carpant.”

Met., xv., 477-478.

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grouping being determined by subject. Further examination shows that the groups themselves, and not only the single stories, are constructed on the principles of epyllia. Each group has either a single idea linking the epyllia together or a chronological framework into which they are fitted, and in each group there is at least one epyllion which forms a digression, generally a long one, from the main theme. The central idea of the group usually finds expression as a subordinate factor in the digression.

In the first group, the loves of the gods, the digression is the story of Phaethon; here the central idea is present since Phaethon is the son of Apollo and Clymene, and their love-story is clearly indicated. In the Theban group there are two digressions. The first is the story of Narcissus, which is introduced in connection with the Theban Teiresias and is related by the punishment of Echo to the theme of Juno's jealousy and revenge. The second consists of the three epyllia which serve as a digression to the story of the Minyeiades; these have no connection with Thebes nor with either of the underlying motives of the first section of the poem. The third group, the revenges of the gods, has Ceres and Proserpina as a digression; but several incidents dealing with punishments inflicted by Ceres link it with the theme of the whole group. All these groups are very closely linked by the underlying theme of Juno's jealousy which recurs constantly in the first two, and appears incidentally in the third in connection with the story of Latona. The passages which form links between the groups are very carefully planned. The first and second are linked by the story of Europa, the bride

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of Jupiter, whose brother, Cadmus, was the founder of Thebes. The Perseus epyllion introduces Danae, another maiden loved by Jupiter, and is thus connected with one of the central ideas, while Medusa's punishment anticipates the subject of the following group.

The Athenian group is a long one and the digressions are considerable. The first is the story of Medea; but this starts from Athens with the episode of Orithyia, whose sons joined the Argonauts, and returns to Athens with Medea's flight to Ægeus and her attempt to poison Theseus. A second and shorter digression gives the story of the Myrmidons told by Æacus to Cephalus. The third and longest contains the four epyllia which are associated with Theseus' expedition to Calydon and his return. It is obvious that, where the connection of the group is chronological, there will be more digression, since the group is held together by its framework rather than by its unity of subject; but it may be noted that the Athenian group deals principally with the love romance which is the main theme of the second division of the poem. Only four of the ten epyllia are not love-stories, and one of these, Dædalus, has the love-story of Ariadne as a digression; another, Philemon and Baucis, is not a love-story, but its beautiful and sympathetic picture of the old husband and wife, who have always been lovers, makes it appropriate to this group. Thus the only stories, which are complete digressions from the theme, are the Myrmidons and Erysichthon. The next group consists entirely of love-stories. The link between the two groups is also supplied by a love-story, the death of Hercules.

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Between the second and third divisions of the poem stands the epyllion of Midas. This story, unlike the others used as linking passages, has no connection of subject with either the preceding or the following group. It has no love motive, nor has it any bearing on historical tradition. It is in fact a simple folk-tale and supplies admirable relief after the Alexandrian treatment of the romances in the preceding group.

With the entrance upon the Trojan Cycle the character of the *Metamorphoses* changes. The framework, since it deals with events considered to be definitely historical, becomes more connected and is treated at greater length: there is more narrative of short incidents, and fewer formal epyllia occur. Since the main subject is largely treated in the framework, the epyllia tend to form digressions. This is particularly noticeable in the Æneas group.

The Trojan group opens with the stories of Laomedon and the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. The first two epyllia, the Peleus and Ceyx and the Alcyone, are digressions, though Peleus is, of course, closely connected with the story of Troy. The epyllia of Cygnus, the Arms of Achilles and Hecuba belong to the main subject, but Nestor's story of Cæneus forms a long digression. In the Æneas group all three epyllia are digressions. The group dealing with Alba and Rome keeps close to its subject and its one great digression is the lecture of Pythagoras.

It would seem, therefore, that Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* intended to give to the world a collection of epyllia. There appear to have been three possible models. He might have published long single epyllia

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on the plan of the *Hecale*; or he might have made a book of short unconnected epyllia, as Gallus probably did; or he might have imitated the catalogue poem and constructed a series all dealing with one subject, and produced such a work as we may suppose the earlier collections of *Metamorphoses* to have been; or again a series of legends attached to one place or person, as Euphorion seems to have done in the *Mopsopia* and perhaps in the *Thrax*. But Ovid's conception was greater than any of these. He wished to write a single poem and yet be unrestricted in choice of subject; he therefore evolved a new type of catalogue poem based on epyllion construction. He was indeed a true Alexandrian in his views of the importance of construction; but he did not make the typical Alexandrian error of obtruding it. To his reader he says, "I will tell the stories of transformation from the beginning of the world to the present day." The reader accepts the statement and does not quarrel with the author if some of the most delightful stories contain no transformation or only an incidental one. He does not realise that the charm and variety of the poem depend very largely on its careful and elaborate construction.

From the catalogue poems Ovid took the idea of arranging his subjects in groups, each group being characterised by one central idea. In the epyllion he found the means by which variety might be gained, lest any group should become monotonous. Hence the groups are broken up by the great digressions.

The result of the combination of the two methods is astonishing. The *Metamorphoses* is one of the most elaborate and artificial examples of poetic construction

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that has ever been produced. It is probable that none of the followers of Callimachus, with all their theories, ever composed a work as completely artificial. But it is their artificiality and not Ovid's which is tiresome. To the general reader the *Metamorphoses*, in spite of its many faults, is and always has been a fascinating collection of stories; and charmed as he is by the infinite variety of treatment in every part of the poem, he does not notice the technical devices by which that variety is achieved.

The *Metamorphoses* is an unrevised poem. Ovid himself says of it:

"Illud opus potuit, si non prius ipse perissem,
Certius a summa nomen habere manu:
Nunc incorrectum populi pervenit in ora,
In populi quicquam si tamen ore mei est."¹

Revision might have tightened the threads of construction at some points, but would have made no substantial difference to the whole. The outline is certainly complete, and correction would probably have been a matter of detail.

¹ *Trist.*, iii., 14, 21-25.

XI

THE METAMORPHOSES OF OVID

II. THE OVIDIAN EPYLLION

OVID's epyllia, considered in detail, would require a large volume to themselves, since every story has its own individuality of treatment. Indeed, where so many have more or less similar outlines of plot, the reader is constantly impressed by the marvellous dexterity and resource of the author. All that can be done in a single chapter is to discuss the general characteristics.

In dividing the *Metamorphoses* into separate epyllia, probably no two critics will agree on the question of what exactly constitutes an epyllion. In some cases there can be no doubt; for example, Io, Procne, Scylla and Meleager are clearly epyllia. But with the shorter tales there is more difficulty in deciding. Orithyia, though an important link, is not an epyllion; it is merely told as a short episode, without development; but it is really impossible to say whether such a passage as the birth of Hercules is to be classed as an epyllion or not. Again, the story of Æneas can hardly be considered as an epyllion; it is too much broken up, and contains too many separate incidents; it is better regarded as the framework of several epyllia. But is the story of the Minyeiades an epyllion with several digressions, or a framework containing several epyllia? There would probably be no doubt about Orpheus. In spite of the

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incidents and epyllia which form the long digression, it has all the characteristics of an epyllion, and cannot be regarded merely as a setting for several epyllia. It will thus be seen that any division of the poem is to some extent arbitrary.

In this chapter it is assumed that there are fifty-four formal epyllia which are indicated by italics in the scheme of construction.¹ These are all passages of at least fifty lines, each containing either a single story or a main subject with one or more digressions. About the character of the majority there can be little doubt; and the omission of some or the inclusion of additional ones will not affect the conclusions of this chapter.

It will be observed that Ovid, like other epyllion writers, preferred love romances. Exactly half of his epyllia are definitely love-stories and a love motive is present, either as subsidiary or in the digression, in a considerable proportion of the others; only fifteen are entirely without it. That most of the love romances are tragic is again in accordance with the practice of other authors.² But, if Parthenius is to be taken as an authority on the preference of epyllion writers in general, Ovid in his choice of subjects would probably shine in comparison with some of his predecessors. His tragedies depend far less than do those of Parthenius, on the themes of violence, unfaithfulness and unnatural affection, and where he does use these themes, he does not as a rule dwell at length on the more unpleasant aspects of them. In a few instances, however,

¹ See Note VI. The lecture of Pythagoras is not included in the fifty-four, as, though it takes the place of an epyllion, it is not narrative.

² Only four have genuinely happy endings; Perseus, Iphis and Ianthe, Pygmalion, Pomona.

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he has deliberately chosen and developed the more repulsive type of plot. As will be shown later, it is possible that these epyllia should not be taken seriously; but whether serious or not, they are apt to strike the modern reader as grave lapses in taste, and the very brilliance of treatment makes them more offensive.

In his choice of subjects Ovid covers a very wide field, but, in spite of the many obscure stories mentioned or told shortly, he prefers to re-tell well-known stories in a new way. A considerable number of his tales are famous myths taken from early sources, and often connected with a historical tradition. Homer, Hesiod and the Attic dramatists provide him with many of his subjects, as, for example, Ulysses and Circe, which is drawn straight from the *Odyssey*, and Pentheus, which recalls the *Bacchæ* of Euripides. It is not necessary to suppose that in the Pentheus, for instance, Ovid had Euripides as his only source, or that every detail could be referred to a definite source outside his own imagination. But the class of stories, which exist in a pre-Alexandrian and well-known literary form, is a large one.

A second class is formed by the romances which cannot be traced in their present form to a pre-Alexandrian period. It has been shown in earlier chapters that the best known forms of the Scylla and Eurydice stories are almost certainly not pre-Alexandrian, and it is most likely that, in love-stories especially, the more sensational details are due to Alexandrian poets, even where the original story is a well-established myth.¹

¹ The banquet of Tereus may be an instance. There is good evidence that the rest of the story occurred in the *Tereus* of Sophocles, but there

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A third class comprises genuine folk-tales. These tend to occur as incidents rather than as long epyllia, but one epyllion, the Midas, has the characteristics of a folk-tale throughout, for the gods are the ordinary fairies or magicians of popular story disguised by Olympian names. But though there are few instances of folk-tale, the elements of the folk-tale are very persistent throughout the *Metamorphoses*. The theme of transformation itself occurs constantly in all European folk-lore, and many of the stories are ultimately based on popular belief. The superstition that the halcyons build their nests on the sea and have calm weather for the nesting period gives rise to the beautiful romance of Alcyone and Ceyx. The marks on the plumage of birds or the petals of flowers have had their part in making many of the stories; often, no doubt, a floating belief or superstition has become attached to a story already existing. A particularly interesting instance of Ovid's use of folk-lore occurs in the Phaethon.¹ Phaethon is the son of Clymene and Apollo; but, though the god is more than once named Phœbus, he has little in common with the Olympian Phœbus. The father of Phaethon is the sun of folk-lore; he has a palace somewhere beyond the land of the Æthiopians; his throne is surrounded by Times and Seasons; his crown is made of golden rays. He is the all-seeing sun,²

is no certain evidence for the banquet in any pre-Alexandrian work. It is exactly the kind of incident that an Alexandrian writer would introduce.

¹ For parallels cf. Appendix XI. in Sir James George Frazer's *Apollodorus*, Vol. II. Loeb Classical Library.

² "Sol oculis iuvenem, quibus aspicit omnia, vidit."

Met., ii., 32.

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who appears so frequently in folk-tales as helper or adviser. It is clear that the folk-tale element had a great attraction for Ovid, and it is partly by his constant use of it that he has succeeded in giving new life to many worn-out themes.

We find, then, in Ovid's subjects the three elements of traditional myth or history, love romance and folk-tale. Sometimes the story may be referred definitely to one or another of these types, sometimes a single story includes the characteristics of more than one type. The occurrence of these three elements has already been noted in some of the earlier epyllia. There is thus in the choice of subjects nothing to distinguish Ovid's epyllia from others; the difference lies in the treatment. The distinctive characteristic of the *Metamorphoses* is the rhetorical style. It is impossible to form a fair estimate of any of Ovid's work without giving due weight to the fact that he was not only a poet but also a rhetorician. As a boy and a young man he had studied diligently in the schools of rhetoric.¹ We learn from the elder Seneca that he was a skilled declaimer, but inclined to over-elaboration.² We know from his own account in the *Tristia* that at a very early age he wrote verse with ease, and it is probable that, when he turned to prose, the exercises of the rhetoricians were fatally easy to him. These exercises were of two kinds, *suasoriae* and *controversiae*; in a *suasoria* the pupil took the part of a legendary or historical character and declaimed on the advisability of a particular course of conduct; in a *controversia* the merits of a special case were argued in

¹ Ov., *Trist.*, iv., 10, 15-30.

² Sen., *Contr.*, ii., 2, 8 ff. ix., 5, 17.

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relation to a general principle.¹ Work of this kind might have been valuable, since it gave practice in composition and declamation; but the subjects were unreal, and rhetorical devices were considered more important than the matter of the speech. The evil results of the system may be traced in much of the literature of the Silver Age; Latin style suffered from the artificiality and over-elaboration of the rhetorical schools. An author of genius could make rhetoric the servant of his art; but the average writer could not free himself from the vices of the rhetorician.

For such a boy as Ovid, with a natural facility for fluent writing and a tendency to shallowness of thought, no worse system of education could have been devised. Seneca makes a most significant remark on his work as a student of rhetoric: "declamabat autem Naso raro controversias et non nisi ethicās; libentius dicebat suasorias. Molestā illi erat omnis argumentatio."² It is not surprising to learn that Ovid preferred *suasoriæ*. The composition of a *controversia* required a close consideration of the law under which the special case fell,

¹ The remains of Seneca's *Suasoriæ* include among other subjects: "Deliberat Agamemnon an Iphigeniam inmolet negante Calchante aliter navigari fas esse: Deliberat Cicero an Antonium deprecetur." The following is a typical subject from his *Controversiæ*: "Liberi parentes alant aut vinciantur. Quidam, cum haberet uxorem et ex ea filium, peregre profectus est. A piratis captus scripsit de redemptione epistulas uxori et filio. Uxor flendo oculos perdidit. Filium euntem ad redemptionem patris alimenta poscit; non remanentem alligari volt."

² Sen., *Contr.*, ii., 2, 12. The subject of this *controversia*, which was actually used by Ovid, is as follows: "Vir et uxor iuraverunt ut si quid alteri optigisset alter moreretur. Vir peregre profectus misit nuntium ad uxorem qui diceret decessisse virum. Uxor se præcipitavit. Recreata iubetur a patre relinquere virum; non vult. Abdicatur." Ovid's choice of this subject bears out the statement quoted above.

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and the details of the argument would need careful preparation. It was far easier to rely on his natural gifts, and his teachers probably cared little, even if they observed that their pupil had no depth of thought.

In studying Ovid it is necessary to keep in mind the faults of his education, for the traces of them are everywhere in his work. Seneca is probably right in saying that in his poems he was not ignorant of his faults, but loved them.¹ He was, in fact, an accomplished rhetorician who had learned all the tricks. But in spite of it he was a poet. His genius was too great to be ruined by a bad system, but the system, nevertheless, left its mark upon him, and the results may be clearly seen throughout the *Metamorphoses*. His treatment of the epyllion is everywhere influenced by rhetorical considerations.

It is obvious that such training, apart from any natural inclination, would attract Ovid to the school of Euphron rather than to that of Theocritus. It was inevitable that he should choose the narrative style, and that in his narratives the dramatic passages should be greatly developed and the purely descriptive elements tend to disappear. The idyllic element, indeed, is either subsidiary or completely absent in Ovid's epyllia. Even in handling such a subject as Polyphemus and Galatea he has few pictorial effects, and in spite of many close imitations, there is little to recall the spirit of Theocritus.

On considering Ovid's treatment of descriptive passages we find that he owes very little to the true epic

¹ "Verbis minime licenter usus est nisi in carminibus, in quibus non ignoravit vitia sua sed amavit." Sen., *Contr.*, ii., 2, 12.

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idyll. Apart from the fact that the idyll does not lend itself to rhetorical treatment, he was not by nature a realist, and his attempts at realistic description are not as a rule very happy. Lafaye¹ notes that his realism is less successful than that of his predecessors and instances his descriptions of combats. There are two considerable passages dealing with battles: the first in Book V. describing the fight at the wedding of Perseus and Andromeda;² the second in Book XII. on the battle of the Centaurs and the Lapithæ.³ In both passages Ovid appears to hold the view of the false realist, that realism consists in multiplying unpleasant details. There is a more successful attempt at realistic description in the story of Philemon and Baucis. Here many of the details are vivid and appropriate, though the whole is somewhat over-elaborated. The longer descriptive passages tend on the whole to be dull, especially where Ovid deliberately attempts realistic treatment.⁴

On the other hand, Ovid has, though in a far less degree, Vergil's power of making a picture start into life by a single phrase or line. Vergil probably visualised his scene much more completely than Ovid did, with the result that every picture conveys the essential details, sometimes clearly outlined, sometimes merely indicated, according as the nature of his conception requires. Ovid tends rather to visualise a single detail or series of details, and where he confines himself to a

¹ Lafaye, C. VII. Cf. C. VI., pp. 113-114.

² *Met.*, v., 30-176.

³ *Met.*, xii., 219-498.

⁴ There is, however, a fine realistic description of a storm at sea in Book XI., 478-572. Possibly this was written after the voyage to Tomi. Cf. *Tristia*, i., 2.

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vivid description of such details his realism is admirable. A few instances may be quoted. Arethusa telling of her flight from Alpheus describes the pursuit:

“Per tamen et campos, per opertos arbore montes,
Saxa quoque et rupes et qua via nulla, cucurri.
Sol erat a tergo. Vidi *præcedere longam*
Ante pedes umbram—nisi si timor illa videbat—
Sed certe sonitusque pedum terrebat, et *ingens*
Crinales vittas afflabat anbelitus oris.”¹

The reality of the picture here is built up on the two vivid details, the shadow of the pursuer and the wind of his breathing. In the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, perhaps the most perfect of the shorter epyllia, Thisbe leaves her home by night:

“Callida per tenebras *versato cardine* Thisbe
Egreditur fallitque suos, adopertaque vultum
Pervenit ad tumulum.”²

Here the one detail of the careful opening of the door calls up the whole picture of her stealthy departure. Again in the description of the cottage of Philemon and Baucis, which, apart from the over-elaborate description of the meal, is one of the best pieces of realism in the *Metamorphoses*, one small point of description above all others brings the scene to life:

“Mensam succincta tremensque
Ponit anus. Mensæ sed erat pes tertius impar:
Testa parem facit.”³

In one type of description Ovid is unrivalled. Vergil, in the famous description of Rumour, has taken an abstract idea and given it a concrete form by personification. But Ovid here goes beyond Vergil; he not only personifies and gives form to an idea, but imagines the

¹ *Met.*, v., 612-617.

² *Met.*, iv., 93-95.

³ *Met.*, viii., 660-662.

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home and surroundings of the person so created. These are the best of Ovid's descriptive passages, for in these he could give free reign to imagination and romance; in these too his rhetoric is most effective. There are not many of them and it is noticeable that they are all short. In Book II. Minerva visits the house of Envy and there is a vivid description of the hideous goddess and her dwelling;¹ in Book VIII. there appears the figure of Famine in the dreary land of Scythia;² in Book XI. is the cave of Sleep, one of the most beautiful passages in Latin poetry;³ and in Book XII. the house of Rumour.⁴ These show Ovid's descriptive power at its highest; he is most at home in an atmosphere of pure romance, and his genius is not adapted to the mixture of romance and realism which is so finely expressed in the *Idylls* of Theocritus.

Ovid was therefore impelled to use a purely narrative style both by the nature of his own genius and by the character of his early training. Discarding idyllic treatment, he gave scope to his rhetorical powers by developing the dramatic form to an extent which is unexampled in any of his predecessors. He not only introduces the long set speech required by the epyllion convention, but records conversations, and constantly makes his characters speak directly to one another. The frequent use of the direct construction adds enormously to the interest of the stories; it is perhaps not generally realised how much of the liveliness and wit of the *Metamorphoses* depends on this device.⁵

¹ *Met.*, ii., 760-782.

² *Met.*, viii., 788-808.

³ *Met.*, xi., 592-615.

⁴ *Met.*, xii., 39-63.

⁵ Almost any part of the *Metamorphoses* will supply instances. A good one may be found in the *Pyramus and Thisbe*. (iv., 55-166.)

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Another characteristic of the *Metamorphoses* is the occasional use of burlesque. It is perhaps impossible to be certain whether in some of the tales Ovid is deliberately using a comic effect or not. There is probably always an element of parody in Ovid's burlesque, and it is likely that if we possessed the complete works of his predecessors both in Greek and Latin epyllion, we should find that many of his extravagances are really parody. It has already been shown that in the Io and Callisto, which have a marked element of burlesque, he may be parodying Calvus. His Galatea is certainly a burlesque on Theocritus' Idylls VI. and XI. Theocritus' conception of Polyphemus in love is humorous, but the humour is touched with tenderness, and both poems serve as the setting of exquisite pictures. Ovid's Cyclops is entirely comic, and his song is a clever piece of burlesque constructed on the lines of the song in Theocritus, but with the details ridiculously exaggerated. Elsewhere we may suspect parody, without any possibility of proof. In the Procne, for example, there are passages, which, to modern taste, are intolerable except as a grim kind of burlesque,¹ and it is probable that Gallus wrote a Procne, which Ovid may have parodied. Or he may have deliberately ridiculed the story, feeling that it was too horrible to be treated seriously. But there is always the possibility that he

¹ E.g. the lines describing Tereus:

"Et modo, si posset, reserato pectore diras
Egerere inde dapes, emersaque viscera gestit:
Flet modo, seque vocat bustum miserabile nati."

Met., vi., 663-665.

It seems possible that, even if Ovid was not parodying a definite epyllion here, he was making fun of the horrors introduced by some of his predecessors.

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intended to be serious and fell into errors of taste through his passion for rhetorical tricks. Ovid's taste is by no means faultless, but it is difficult, in view of his strong sense of the ridiculous, to believe that he meant all his extravagances to be taken seriously.

The general style of the *Metamorphoses*, therefore, is narrative and dramatic, and the dramatic element is much more freely used than in earlier epyllia. The narrative is usually vivid and direct, and the descriptive element is admitted sparingly, the best effects being obtained where its use is most restrained. The whole treatment is coloured by rhetoric, which at its best is graceful and ornamental. There is in addition the occasional introduction of burlesque. We must now consider Ovid's use of the two most important characteristics of epyllion construction, the set speech and the digression.

The constant occurrence in epyllion of a set speech may have influenced Ovid in choosing the epyllion form. A collection of epyllia must contain long speeches, and, by choosing suitable subjects, Ovid could freely indulge his passion for rhetorical effect. Actually about half his epyllia contain long speeches. We may disregard those speeches which merely supply a digression. Like other epyllion writers Ovid often gives his digression in the form of a story told by one of his characters, but he does not as a rule use such a digression in the same epyllion with a formal appeal or lament. Only in the Pentheus and the Orpheus do we find two distinct long speeches, the one narrative and the other rhetorical; in the first of these Pentheus delivers a set speech to the Thebans, and later Acœtes

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tells the story of Bacchus and the sailors; in the second, Orpheus makes a short appeal to the powers of the underworld, while the digression, consisting of four epyllia and several episodes, is contained in his song after the loss of Eurydice. Twice the digression occurs as a narrative introduced into a set speech, in the Creation, where Juppiter proposes to the gods the destruction of mankind and justifies himself by the tale of Lycaon,¹ and in the Pomona, where Vertumnus introduces the story of Iphis and Anaxarete into his wooing. Otherwise these narrative speeches are merely a device for supplying a digression and should be classed as digressions.

The genuine formal speeches fall into three classes: appeals, laments and analytical soliloquies.² The appeals are naturally the most varied, since the circumstances differ very widely. Four are addressed to large audiences: these are Pentheus' appeal to the Thebans to reject Bacchus, Orpheus' prayer to the shades, and the brilliant speeches of Ajax and Ulysses in the arms of Achilles. Besides these there are four addressed to individuals, the appeal of the Sun to Phaethon, the song of Polyphemus to Galatea, the wooing of Vertumnus and the letter of Byblis, which is equivalent to a formal speech. In the last three Ovid displays his versatility by representing his wooers in circumstances of farce, comedy and tragedy. Polyphemus is the most successful; his song is a delightful piece of burlesque, with

¹ There is, however, a break of a few lines between the proposal and the narrative.

² Three only fall outside these classes: Juppiter's proposal to destroy mankind, Niobe's boast and Juppiter's prophecy of the greatness of Augustus, which is midway between speech and digression.

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many genuine touches of poetry; the wooing of Vertumnus is good, but not in any way striking; that of Byblis is brilliantly written, but the subject and still more the sophistry of the heroine make it repulsive.

The formal lament, as might be expected, occurs several times in Ovid, but he shows much more variety in its use than his predecessors. Curiously enough he has no single instance of the lament of a betrayed heroine; probably he felt that he had exhausted the theme in the *Heroides*. He has, however, two instances, the Scylla and the Byblis, where the heroine laments her rejection, and a variant on the theme is supplied by Narcissus and Iphis, who mourn over a vain love. The other two laments are for the dead, Alcyone mourning for Ceyx, Hecuba for Polyxena.

Among these speeches the lament of Scylla is the most interesting from the point of view of epyllion form. It is a brilliant version of an old theme. Scylla reproaches Minos for deserting her and reminds him of the benefits she has conferred upon him, pointing out that her loss has left her no refuge. She makes the usual reflections on his parentage,

"Non genetrix Europa tibi est, sed inhospita Syrtis,
Armeniae tigres austroque agitata Charybdis."¹

Like other heroines she admits her crime, but there is not very much conviction in her self-reproach. In fact, so far as the language is concerned, the speech has a great deal in common with that of Ariadne in the *Peleus and Thetis*, and parallels can be found in all extant speeches of this type; but in spirit Ovid is very far from his predecessors in that the speech is entirely without pathos.

¹ *Met.*, viii., 120-121.

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From Euripides' Medea to Vergil's Dido, the deserted heroine, in whatever vein she is conceived, has her pathetic side; even Ariadne, the heroine of an idyll, has the pathos of forlornness. But Scylla is not pathetic; she is coldly reasonable, and her speech, though written on the old lines, strikes a new note.

The same cold brilliance may be observed in the analytical speeches. There are five of these and all are of great interest; in each case the speaker is a heroine about to commit a crime, and four of them, Medea, Scylla, Byblis and Myrrha, are heroines of love-stories; the fifth is Althea, who is represented as divided between her duty to her brothers and her son, but there is no essential difference between Althea and the other four.

None of these speeches has any real note of passion. The heroines state that they are the victims of emotions which they cannot control, and the reader accepts the statement as necessary to the story; but the emotion is not felt. Ovid's Medea is not like the Medea of Apollonius, a young girl bewildered by an over-mastering desire which she cannot analyse or control; nor is his Althea like the Medea of Euripides, a woman whose passion for revenge overcomes all natural feeling. Ovid's heroines analyse every sensation, and reason out their actions in polished rhetoric with much antithesis.

The speeches are, in fact, conceived in the spirit of the rhetorical schools. There is a set subject, and the poet declaims in accordance with recognised rules, and without reference to the probable feelings of the character represented. The most brilliant of them are really

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suasoria in verse. But in spite of the lack of genuine emotion they are something more than brilliant efforts of rhetoric; there is frequently psychological truth in them. Ovid can analyse with remarkable accuracy the unconscious stages of feeling which ultimately lead to and justify crime. Scylla's speech is the clearest instance. Here Ovid has made his heroine trace out the whole process by which her crime becomes to her no crime at all, but an actual duty. She does not know whether to rejoice or grieve over the war. She must grieve that Minos is her enemy, but, if there had been no war, she would never have known him. Perhaps she might be given as a hostage to stop the war. She would give anything in return for his love;

"tantum patrias ne posceret arces.
 Nam pereant potius sperata cubilia, quam sim
 Proditione potens. Quamvis sæpe utile vinci
 Victoris placidi fecit clementia multis."¹

Once started, the thought of treachery persists. Minos has a just cause; Megara will probably be taken; better that it should fall without further slaughter;

"Cœpta placent et stat sententia tradere mecum
 Dotalem patriam, finemque imponere bello."²

After this the only remaining consideration is how to achieve her object. This is a brilliant analysis of the development of a criminal instinct; but no heroine in real life could reason it out so coldly.

Byblis and Myrrha argue in exactly the same way, but, where Scylla is unattractive, they are entirely repulsive, not only on account of the nature of their stories, but because the sophistry of their reasoning with its

¹ *Met.*, viii., 54-57.

² *Met.*, viii., 67-68.

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adornment of antithesis is far more marked than Scylla's. Medea and Althea reason somewhat less coldly; Althea comes nearer, perhaps, to real feeling than any of the others, but all, though voicing a real mental process, are incapable of rousing the sympathy of the reader.

No doubt tragedy would be out of place in the fantastic world of the *Metamorphoses*. But in any case Ovid had not the imaginative sympathy which produces tragedy. Like his heroines, he could analyse motives, but could not feel passion. Whether Ovid himself realised this fact it is impossible to determine; and on this question depends the further question whether his heroines are to be taken seriously or not. It may be that his pictures of unnatural passion are deliberate burlesques on a favourite Alexandrian theme, and were so understood by his original readers. If so, the modern reader's failure to detect the poet's purpose would be accounted for by the fact that Ovid, though possessed of a keen sense of the ridiculous, has little sense of humour; and burlesque, unless there is a strong sense of humour behind it, does not outlast changes of fashion and taste.

There can be no doubt that the speeches in the *Metamorphoses* add enormously to the vividness of the narrative. Although it is probable that Ovid deliberately chose subjects which gave scope for the development of the set speech, yet, on the whole, his rhetoric is under control. The story is always the first consideration, and the speech is used to advance the action or to supply ornament. Moreover, since many of his epyllia contain no set speech and since the speeches themselves

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are varied in subject, the reader cannot complain of monotony. In most instances the lack of true emotion passes unnoticed. The great speeches of Ajax and Ulysses, for example, are unrivalled of their kind and seem perfectly appropriate to their setting. Ovid has not the capacity of a great orator to move his audience by depth of feeling, but he is a supreme rhetorician, and, at his best, can charm his readers by brilliance alone. It is perhaps only in the *suasoriæ* of the criminal heroines that the unreality is apparent; the cold cleverness of the argument is unsuitable to a character supposed to be labouring under an overwhelming emotion, and the illusion of the reader is lost.

Ovid introduces digressions as a means of including stories rather than as a formal device. A digression is not an essential part of his epyllion; in fact, there are only eighteen instances in the *Metamorphoses*, and some of them are very short. Twelve are stories told by characters in the main action, and two more belong to the same class, since the story of Medusa is told by Perseus and differs from the other narratives only in its indirect form, and the story of Syrinx is actually begun by Mercury and finished in indirect form. Three others, the stories of Echo, Ariadne and the dog Lælaps, belong essentially to the main action, but are sufficiently developed to be regarded as independent narratives, since they interrupt the sequence of the story. In the Narcissus Ovid goes back to explain how Echo lost the power of speech; in the Dædalus he pauses to tell the fate of Ariadne; both these digressions are very short. The Procris has a longer digression;

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Cephalus interrupts his story by an account of the hunting of the beast at Thebes and the loss of Lælaps. Only once is the digression introduced by means of a work of art, namely in the story of Arachne, where the pictures woven by Pallas and Arachne are described; this digression is, however, a series of incidents and not a single story.

The digressions in the *Metamorphoses* are much less formal than in other epyllia. In the three instances mentioned, where they form part of the main action, there is no formal introduction at all. Many of the digressions are stories which are told in answer to a question, as in the Ceres, where the goddess asks Arethusa to explain why her stream disappears underground, or to convey a warning, as in the Coronis, where the crow tells the story of Erichthonius to the raven. In two instances, the Minyeiades and the Orpheus, the digression is a series of stories unconnected with the main action and with one another. The link between the main subject and the digression is always more or less artificial, but Ovid has even less respect than his predecessors for formal connection. Further, he takes no care to establish the true connection of the digression with its main subject, namely the connection of parallel and contrast. He does not differentiate at all in style, and, though the introduction of a metamorphosis usually supplies a parallel in subject, it is as a rule a purely accidental one. Occasionally there may be an intentional parallel. The love-story of Vertumnus and Pomona has as its digression the love-story of Iphis and Anaxarete, and here we may perhaps find a parallel between the subjects and a contrast in the endings.

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But the story of Iphis is told as a warning to Pomona and was probably chosen rather because it was a suitable story than because it satisfied the conventions of the epyllion. Again the story of Picus and his companions makes a very suitable digression on the story of Ulysses and Circe, since both contain metamorphoses of men to beasts, and both heroes defy Circe, Picus suffering transformation and Ulysses gaining the victory. But if the two stories were included, they must necessarily fall into connection with one another, since Circe is the central figure in both, so that here again the use of a parallel digression may be accidental. There is perhaps only one instance where Ovid has chosen his digression subject to conform to the convention, namely in the *Io*. Here the parallel is clear; in both stories a god pursues an unwilling maiden, and both maidens are transformed; a contrast is provided by the fact that Syrinx escapes, while *Io* is caught. The observance of the convention here is interesting, since in the *Io* Ovid seems to have intended a burlesque epyllion and was perhaps parodying the *Io* of Calvus;¹ thus the traditional form was essential.

We have seen that Ovid evolved his scheme of construction from the epyllion form, and observed very strictly the traditions of that form. But in the individual epyllia he is bound by no tradition. The one condition required is that the story must move; consequently, while retaining the old form, he modifies it to suit the new requirements. His predecessors might make pictures, elaborate details, leave out essential points or convey them by allusion; Ovid would do none of these

¹ See pp. 134, ff.

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things unless they would serve as an aid to the narrative. Speeches and digressions are introduced only if they suit his purpose, and the conventions are modified or discarded, as the narrative may require, with the result that many of his epyllia belong to a new type; they are short stories in which conversation is substituted for long speeches, and the digression is altogether omitted. The narrative is direct without allusiveness or parade of learning and there is little or no trace of idyllic style. Cadmus, Pyramus and Philemon and Baucis are excellent examples of this type.

Something has already been said of Ovid's methods of re-telling stories already used by earlier writers. If we still possessed the whole collection of lost epyllia, we should probably realise more than we do Ovid's extraordinary dexterity. To rewrite the story of Orpheus and Eurydice without once trespassing on Vergil's ground was a wonderful achievement; but it is by no means a single one. Wherever we still possess an earlier version we find that Ovid has told the story in an entirely new way, either concentrating on different incidents and details, or, if he does cover the same ground, varying the treatment.¹ This point has already been illustrated in a comparison between the methods of Vergil and Ovid as shown in the story of Orpheus. It may be further demonstrated by considering Ovid's

¹ Even when he condenses a long story the details are different. For example his account of Circe and Ulysses follows the *Odyssey* very closely in outline, but different points are stressed. As the story is told by one of the companions of Ulysses, the transformations become more important. Circe, too, is treated differently; in the *Odyssey* she is a goddess, but Ovid gives her rather the attributes of a witch—a characteristic Alexandrian treatment.

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epyllia of Scylla and Erysichthon, since in these two cases we have earlier epyllion versions.

It is in keeping with Ovid's general treatment of the epyllion that his Scylla is simple and direct, showing none of the allusions and omissions which make the *Ciris* obscure. Ovid does not mention the story of the curse, which forced Scylla to love Minos. He makes her see the king from the tower, where she goes to watch the battle, and fall in love with his appearance. In the *Ciris* we do not learn how Scylla first saw Minos; she climbs the walls after the passion has seized her. Both poets describe the effect of her love, but Ovid dwells more on the thoughts inspired by the sight of Minos, the author of the *Ciris* on her actions. In the *Ciris* Minos offers Scylla terms, while Ovid makes her devise the plot herself. For the long scene with the nurse Carme in the *Ciris* Ovid substitutes Scylla's analytical speech, and no second character is introduced. The author of the *Ciris* hurries over Scylla's crime and rejection in five lines. Ovid tells this in some detail, quoting the words of both characters. From this point the two poets follow different versions. In the *Ciris* Scylla is tied to the ship of Minos and utters her lament as she is borne through the sea: in the *Metamorphoses* she is left in Megara, and after uttering her lament throws herself into the water. The two laments are very different in tone; Ovid's is a variation of the traditional complaint, with the ingratitude of Minos as the principal theme. In the *Ciris* also Scylla reproaches Minos, but in a very different spirit; she is much less defiant, her reproaches are gentler, and her admission of guilt more sincere; her whole speech is touched with

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the pathos that is lacking in Ovid's Scylla, and she ends with a passionate declaration that she will believe anything rather than that Minos has been the author of her sufferings. The transformation of Scylla, which is told in great detail in the *Ciris*, is reduced by Ovid to a few lines. Both poets are interested in the psychology of the heroine, but in different aspects of it; the author of the *Ciris* concentrates on Scylla's love and the various emotions excited by Minos at different points in the story; Ovid has no analysis of Scylla's passion; he dwells on the results of it, and shows the process by which she justifies her crime, and the violence of her feelings when the crime is proved fruitless.¹

In comparing these two versions, it is impossible to say that either is better. Each has its own merits and any preference must be a matter of personal taste. It is clear from Ovid's treatment of his subjects here and elsewhere that he did not wish to challenge comparison. A somewhat different method of reproducing a story may be observed in his Erysichthon. The earlier version is found in the sixth Hymn of Callimachus, which comes very near to being an epyllion.

Both narratives begin with the crime of Erysichthon. Callimachus has a charming description of the sacred grove, while Ovid describes the tree which Ceres loved.² Callimachus makes the goddess herself appear, first in human form to warn Erysichthon, then in her own person to curse him. In the *Metamorphoses* the warning is given by one of Erysichthon's companions

¹ Whether the final speech has touches of burlesque or not, there is much truth in it.

² Callimachus makes it a poplar, Ovid an oak.

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and the curse is pronounced by the nymph of the tree. Here Ovid includes an incident, which is evidently his own invention. Ceres does not inflict the penalty herself, but sends a nymph to the house of Famine to ask that Erysichthon may be punished. Callimachus' account of the hunger of Erysichthon is one of his best passages. The treatment is realistic, and it is marked by a lightness and grace which make it entirely delightful; it is a masterpiece of comic realism. The mother's excuses when Erysichthon is invited to a feast, the lamentations of the household, the list of animals (including the cat) eaten by Erysichthon, the complaint of his father that the cooks refuse to do any more work—all these are told with inimitable wit and charm. Ovid attempted no imitation of this passage; he took up the story at the point where Callimachus ended it and told of the transformations by which Erysichthon's daughter gained money for her father. In the Scylla he has shortened the story and treated it from a different point of view, altering the character of the heroine, and slightly varying the incidents. In the Erysichthon he has lengthened the story by the introduction of new incidents, and has completely omitted anything that might suggest comparison with the best passages of Callimachus.

Nothing can better illustrate Ovid's genius than the study of these two epyllia. In many instances, no doubt, he was handling tales which had never been well told; it cannot be supposed, for example, that Cicero's *Alcyone* had much artistic value. But here we find him dealing with themes which had already been treated artistically, and producing, not finer versions, but ori-

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ginal ones. In all cases where an earlier treatment of the story still exists, Ovid's treatment is original. His *Medea* tells the whole story, and yet avoids imitation of Euripides or Apollonius. He has even escaped the influence of Vergil; for his Vergilian imitations are only on the surface; they are merely quotations, into which Ovid has breathed his own spirit, treating Vergil exactly as Vergil had treated his predecessors. Ovid is a true son of Alexandria, but his kinship is rather with Euphorion and Parthenius than with Theocritus and Callimachus. The stories of love and crime and the interest in magic and marvels, which are characteristic of the later Alexandrians, are characteristic also of Ovid. But he differs from them in one essential respect: he brings to his work the originality and genius which appear to have been totally lacking in them.

The fact that Ovid included all his epyllia in a single poem has resulted in the practice of passing judgment on them as a whole. Such a judgment must necessarily be unduly influenced by personal taste. The reader, who admires Ovid's brilliance of technique and power as a story-teller, is apt to overlook the frequent lapses of taste and even the repulsiveness of some parts of the poem; the reader, who is irritated by Ovid's personality, tends to see only his shallowness and sophistry, and, while admitting his cleverness and rhetorical skill, does not discover his real greatness. A fairer estimate of him as an epic poet may be reached by considering the poem in its true light as a collection of epyllia.

Ovid with all his faults is a great story-teller, and the best of his epyllia rank very high. In these he is a

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master of romance, possessing the rare gift of creating a purely fantastic world, which is nevertheless convincing to the reader's imagination. In his best work too the general level of his poetry is high; and, though he never approaches Lucretius or Vergil in grandeur and depth of feeling, he has many passages which of their kind are unequalled. Moreover, the majority of his epyllia are good, or are marred only by occasional dullness or bad taste. But in a few instances he has succumbed to the temptation of using the sensational type of plot, and he is in these probably more repulsive than any of his predecessors by the very fact that his gifts are greater than theirs.

XII

EPYLLION AND GRAND EPIC

In the three centuries covered by the history of the epyllion its supremacy was only twice seriously challenged. The first attempt to restore grand epic to its former dignity was made by Apollonius Rhodius and was a failure;¹ the second, that of Vergil, was an overwhelming success. It is true that the *Metamorphoses* are later than the *Æneid*, but Ovid was the only poet of importance who reverted to epyllion form, and his very use of it to construct a long poem proves how complete was the victory of the "great book." Ovid found no imitators of his form among the Roman poets. The short story writers were to come later. Latin epic henceforth follows Vergil.

It has already been suggested that the storm which raged over the first publication of the *Argonautica* was primarily due to the aggressive attitude of its author. But however great was the hostility of the critics, Apollonius could not have suffered so absolute a defeat, if he had really done what he claimed to have done. But the truth is that the *Argonautica*, though in many respects a great poem, is not an epic at all. It is possible that, in its original form, it was even less like an epic

¹ The other Alexandrian epic, of which we have some knowledge, namely the *Messenica* of Rhianus, does not appear to have aroused adverse criticism. It may be that historical epic was not regarded with disfavour; or possibly the poem was not important enough to be noticed by the supporters of Callimachus.

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than it is in its present one. But even as it stands, a recitation of the first two books would try the patience of the most indulgent audience.

Much has been written on the causes which contribute to the failure of the poem. Croiset¹ points out various elements which, he maintains, are not epic. He instances the treatment of the gods and the marvellous, the dullness of the battles and above all the parade of geographical and mythological learning. But these elements do not in themselves constitute failure, as is proved by their occurrence in the *Æneid*. Vergil's gods are conventional and his battles uninspiring; moreover, he is quite as learned as Apollonius. The new epic could hardly avoid these characteristics, for it was bound both by the Homeric tradition and by the Alexandrian love of learning. But the fact remains that the conventional treatment, which is a serious fault in the *Argonautica*, is unimportant in the *Æneid*.

The failure of the *Argonautica* as a grand epic lies essentially in the weakness of its construction. Apollonius never mastered the technique of epic; it is indeed possible that he did not realise that there was any technique to master. His principle would appear to consist in beginning at the beginning and narrating every incident faithfully and in chronological order. This is the method of a chronicler, not of an epic poet, and about three-quarters of the *Argonautica* are pure chronicle. It is only when Apollonius loses himself in the romance of Medea that the story becomes alive; and the very success of the romance only adds to the failure of the epic.

In happier circumstances Apollonius might have over-

¹ *Histoire de la Littérature Grecque*, Vol. V., p. 232.

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come his technical weakness. A careful study of the *Aeneid* reveals very clearly the fact that Vergil also set out with an insufficient knowledge of technique. There is a remarkable advance in constructive power in his later books. But Apollonius had set himself a very difficult if not an impossible task. Two factors were constantly present to hamper his work, namely the difficulty of the subject and the influence of the epyllion. A poet with greater natural powers of construction than Apollonius could have freed himself from the shackles of the epyllion, but it is doubtful whether any poet could make a genuine epic out of the adventures of Jason.

At first sight the subject appears promising. There is a hero, a journey into strange seas and lands, an apparently impossible task and plenty of incident. But a little examination shows that the difficulties are far greater than the advantages.

Since the voyage of the Argo covers a considerable amount of time and space, the unity of the story must necessarily reside in the character of the hero. Jason, however, is not a satisfactory hero, and the cause of this is very largely inherent in the story itself. There appears in the twelfth Book of the *Odyssey* a reference to what is probably the real tradition at the back of the legend:

οἷη δὲ κείνη γε παρέπλω ποντοπόρος νηὺς
'Ἀργῶ πᾶσι μέλουσα παρ' Αἰήταο πλέουσα·
καὶ νῦν κε τὴν ἔνθ' ὥκα βάλεν μεγάλας ποτὶ πέτρας,
ἀλλ' Ἥρη παρέπεμψε, ἐπεὶ φίλος ἦεν Ἰήσων.¹

Here is the real subject of the story; it is Argo that is

¹ *Od.*, xii., 69-72.

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πάσι μέλουσα; Argo, not Jason, is the centre of the legend, and a ship is hardly an epic hero.

If an attempt is made to shift the interest from Argo to her captain, another difficulty appears; all the Argo's crew are heroes, and there is no particular reason for Jason's prominence except that he is the most interested in the purpose of the expedition. Indeed one hero, Heracles, is so obviously in the way that he has to be removed early. In the later part of the story it is true that Jason emerges from among the other heroes, but only to be dwarfed by Medea. This defect is again inherent in the story, for Jason is entirely controlled by Medea's charm. Even without the love-story, which makes her dominate the third Book of the *Argonautica*, she would still be the more important figure, since the action turns on her help and Jason is merely passive.¹

Again the very wealth of incident leads to difficulty. There were endless myths and traditions connected with the voyage of the Argo, some interesting, some dull, and most of them merely episodic. A wiser poet would have selected a few, and by a process of enlargement or invention would have made them take their place as coherent parts of the whole, each having its own influence on the main plot. Apollonius does occasionally use his incidents in this way; the loss of Hylas leads to the desertion of Heracles, who must be removed from the scene of action in order to give the

¹ Jason, as an epic hero, probably suffers also by the presentment of him in Euripides' *Medea*. Professor Gilbert Murray in the introduction to his translation of the play points out how essentially unromantic this presentment is. The Jason of Apollonius is never sufficiently alive to achieve a romance of his own, and the reader must inevitably be influenced by the more vivid portrait of Euripides.

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prowess of Jason a chance. The story of Phineus, like the story of Helenus in the *Æneid*, introduces an important prophecy. But the long episodes of Hypsipyle, Cyzicus and Amycus are mere digressions. It is, of course, extremely easy for the story of a voyage to degenerate into a chronicle, and there is a further difficulty in the fact that the Argo has a return as well as an outward voyage. Here Odysseus and Æneas have an enormous advantage over Jason. Apollonius might have ended his story with the escape from Colchis, or he might have compressed the return voyage, and only used the essential incidents, the murder of Absyrtus and the marriage in Phæacia. But his passion for geography was fatal, and the *Argonautica* ends as it began in a chronicle.

With a subject of this kind it was impossible to resist the influence of the epyllion. The *Argonautica*, in fact, is little more than a collection of epyllia, of which the love-story is the longest and best. The first Book contains three, Hypsipyle,¹ Cyzicus² and Hylas;³ the second Book opens with the long episode of Amycus.⁴ The story of Hypsipyle, indeed, has every characteristic of a formal epyllion including a digression on the decoration of Jason's cloak. The temptation to digress is frequently too much for Apollonius. Twice in the first Book he finds himself doing it and comments on it;⁵ but usually he is unsparing of irrelevant detail.

There is no real unity until Medea appears in the third book. The earlier part of the book drags, but from

¹ i., 609-921.

² i., 936-1077.

³ i., 1207-1357.

⁴ ii., 1-163.

⁵

ἀλλὰ τί μύθους

Αἰθαλίδεω χρειώ με διηνεκέως ἀγορεύειν ; i., 648-649.

ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν τηλοῦ κεν ἀποπλάγξειεν αἰοιδῆς. i., 1220.

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line 439 onwards there is no lack of interest. The method, however, is that of epyllion not epic. The sole interest lies in the heroine, and the subject is a love-story complicated by a crime; the crime too consists in the betrayal of a father—a very popular motive in epyllion. As the heroine is a witch, the well-worn theme of magic is prominent. It is enormously to the credit of Apollonius, that with an entirely conventional subject and every opportunity of developing it on recognised lines, he was able to produce a living and original study of character. It is, indeed, most remarkable that, having the power to create Medea, he has created no other character. All the rest are mere shadows to an extent that is unusual even in epyllion, where the development of one character at the expense of the others is legitimate. He seems to have expended all the force of his creative imagination on the third Book, so that it becomes difficult to believe that the same hand was responsible for the lifeless incident of Hypsipyle and the passion of Medea.

A love-story is a dangerous element in a grand epic, more especially if it is in any way a tragic one. It is apt to divide the interest and to shift its centre from the hero to the heroine. The same difficulty arises over the story of Dido in the *Æneid*; but the main action of the *Æneid* does not depend on Dido's love as that of the *Argonautica* does on Medea's, and, though Dido tends to dwarf Æneas in the fourth Book, her tragedy remains an incident.¹

¹ It has not been generally realised in the past that the character of Æneas in the fourth Book is quite as careful a study as that of Dido, and in some respects a more subtle one. The tragedy very largely depends on mutual misunderstanding; an ambitious and unimaginative

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The end of the *Argonautica* is like the beginning. The real interest is over with the flight from Colchis, though there is a flicker of it again in Medea's speech to Jason before the murder of Absyrtus—a speech which is a variant of the stock speech of an epyllion heroine. As in the outward voyage, there is often romance and charm, but no epic unity.

The reader who approaches the *Argonautica*, realising that it is not an epic, will have his reward. Apollonius was a great poet and his worst faults can be forgiven him for the sake of his beauties. Moreover, his Medea is one of the great heroines of ancient literature. But the reader, who requires an epic, had better leave the *Argonautica* alone. Apollonius had no gift for epic construction; his natural genius lay in the direction of epyllion, and his subject inevitably suggested chronicle. Either method is fatal to epic.

There is a certain irony in the fact that, while Apollonius embarked with complete confidence on the task of reviving grand epic, Vergil approached it with much hesitation. It must have been in the early stages of composition that he wrote to Augustus: "Tanta inchoata res est, ut pæne vitio mentis tantum opus ingressus mihi videar."¹ But where Apollonius failed Vergil

man is brought into contact with an emotional woman, whose temperament is beyond her own control. Æneas is not deliberately brutal; he merely fails to understand why Dido cannot view the position with common sense. Dido equally fails to understand why Æneas should want anything except her love. The development of this situation naturally makes Dido the more tragic figure, and the tragedy is heightened by the blindness of Anna, who is devoted to her sister, but without any conception of her state of mind.

¹ Macrobius, *Sat.*, i., 24, 11.

The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid succeeded, and the new epic triumphed over the epyllion.

The cause of Vergil's success lies partly in his greater gifts. It is true that Apollonius at his best does not suffer by the comparison; but he is frequently very far below his best, whereas Vergil's general level is high. Moreover, Vergil's imagination is much wider and his thought deeper. All his characters live, however slightly they are studied. But his greater power as a poet and thinker would not necessarily produce an epic. He was faced, though in a less degree, with the same technical difficulties as Apollonius, and much of the secret of his success lies in his realisation of them.

The subject of the *Æneid*, as it came into Vergil's hands, must have seemed to have little promise. The voyage was represented by the barest traditions connecting the name of Æneas with various points in the Mediterranean. The adventures of Æneas in Italy were a little more definite; there was an accepted tradition of the founding of Lavinium, though the details varied to some extent. But the material, regarded as the basis of an epic in twelve books, can hardly have appeared sufficient.

The scantiness of the legend was, however, actually an advantage. It contained the two elements consecrated by the Homeric tradition, a voyage and a war, and it had a hero who could boast quite a prominent position in the *Iliad*, and was, moreover, marked out by Poseidon's prophecy as the founder of a great race. The obscurity, which surrounded his career after his escape from Troy, gave Vergil a great advantage over Apollonius, who was hampered by the multitude of tradi-

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tions relating to the Argonauts. Vergil availed himself very fully of the opportunities offered, and by dealing somewhat boldly with the accepted chronology was able to introduce other legends, which, chosen as they were for their interest, enriched the narrative, as no chance collection of traditions could have done.

A second advantage of the subject was that it was possible to unite with it the living tradition, which is vital to the writer of heroic epic. Æneas in Vergil's time was only a conventional hero borrowed from Homer, but Rome was a living fact, and Vergil saw that the poem could only live if it embodied the spirit of Rome. Accordingly the story of Æneas was staged against a background which comprised the whole pageant of Roman history; nor was Roman history for Vergil confined only to the city; it was also a possession of all Italy.

The passion for Italy is one of the great moving springs in all Vergil's work, and finds its most powerful expression in the *Æneid*. It is never absent for long, and by its aid even the worn-out conventions of epic take on new life. It is particularly interesting to note that it saves the divine machinery from being merely an accessory required by epic form. From the point of view of construction the gods are a convention and the action of the poem could dispense with them, but they are more than a convention when they represent Vergil's conviction that the greatness of Rome was not the result of chance.¹

¹ It may be noted that the weakest passages dealing with the gods are those in which Vergil comes nearest to the spirit of Apollonius, as, for instance, in the interview between Venus and Juno in the fourth Book.

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Vergil therefore had a suitable epic subject, which could be brought into connection with the thought and feeling of his contemporaries. He was thus saved on the one hand from the dullness which must characterise any writer who merely imitates Homer, and on the other from the conventional prettiness of the Alexandrian court poet. He does suffer from the first defect at times, notably in his battles, but very rarely from the second.

Like Apollonius, Vergil had to contend with the epyllion tradition. In Rome the epyllion had completely superseded the epic, for Cicero regards himself as old-fashioned in his admiration for Ennius. Moreover, Vergil in his youth had been closely associated with the *Cantores Euphorionis*, who had inherited the Alexandrian belief that grand epic had perished with Homer. However, since a grand epic was required of him, he was obliged to seek a model, and all the available evidence suggests that he turned first to the *Argonautica*. It was natural that he should do so, for he had probably never studied epic construction from the point of view of a writer, and had thus not discovered where the weakness of Apollonius lay. Moreover, he had always gone to the Alexandrians for his models, and in this instance, since Homer was forbidden, there was nowhere else to go.

The earliest version of *Aeneid* I.-VI. was probably much more like the *Argonautica* in construction than is the present one. If, as seems not unlikely, the third Book was originally written in the third person and placed at the beginning, the likeness must have been marked, for the third Book, even in its present form, tends towards

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the chronicle style. In any case, internal evidence suggests that III. and IV. are early work and have been little revised; and it is in these books that Vergil is both weakest in construction and nearest to Apollonius. The voyage is the least interesting part of the poem, though Vergil is never as dull as Apollonius often is; and Dido's tragedy, since it shifts the centre of interest, and yet structurally is only an incident, is dangerously near to becoming an epyllion.¹

It is impossible here to discuss the process of Vergil's advance in technique. He had probably written a considerable amount before he discovered that Apollonius was not a safe guide. Even before he made the final discovery, he was inclined to turn to Homer, for there can be no doubt that the Fall of Troy was always in its present form. But, as soon as it became clear that the *Argonautica* was not a grand epic, Vergil boldly deserted Apollonius, and adopted from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* not their spirit, which could not be reproduced, but their technique.

It is only necessary here to point out briefly the technical devices which are neglected in the *Argonautica* and present in the *Æneid*. Vergil based his outline mainly on the *Odyssey*, and, like Homer, began in the middle of the story; both Æneas and Odysseus have come near to the end of their wanderings, and the earlier history is produced later in the form of a narrative by the hero. The use of a first person narrative is of

¹ It does not become an epyllion for two reasons: firstly the individuality of Æneas is preserved, although he is, for the time being, the less important character; and secondly Dido stands for Carthage, and Carthage is an essential part of the historical background.

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incalculable value in epic, for it makes it possible to compress the whole action within a limited period of time, and thus to avoid the chronicle method. Apollonius might have used it with advantage, for he could have begun his story at Colchis, and the return of the Argonauts would have been less tedious, if he had made the more exciting incidents of the outward voyage the subject of a narrative by Jason.

In the account of that part of the wanderings of Æneas, which lies outside the third Book, Vergil has concentrated upon three incidents only; these are the visit to Carthage, the funeral games in Sicily and the descent into the underworld. These incidents are interesting in themselves, and at the same time intimately connected with the historical unity of the poem. The first and fourth Books show how the enmity arose between Rome and Carthage; the sixth Book has for its climax the great pageant of the heroes of Rome. The fifth Book serves a double purpose: it stands as a lighter interlude between the tragedy of the fourth and the solemnity of the sixth; and it stresses the close historical connection between Italy and Sicily. Thus by the selection of incidents which are both important and interesting Vergil avoids such a series of unconnected narratives as makes the first two books of the *Argonautica* tedious.¹

Vergil also realised that an epic must have more than one character, and that the minor characters are as

¹ The same method is employed in the account of the wanderings in the *Odyssey*. Outside the narrative of Odysseus, there are only three incidents: the voyage from Ogygia, the visit to Phæacia and the landing in Ithaca.

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important as the principals. There is no single person, having a definite part in the action, who is not carefully studied, even if the study is a slight one. Vergil does not analyse his characters; the analysis is left to the reader. Moreover, his character drawing is extraordinarily subtle; it may be necessary to read a given passage many times before the full significance of the speeches and actions is discovered. Here Vergil has seized upon a very important difference between epic and epyllion. An epyllion is all the better for containing only one or, at the most, two real character studies; but the greater complexity of epic form requires a greater number of living actors.

Vergil and Apollonius were equally faced with the necessity of including certain conventions demanded by epic form and by the taste of the age; but, whereas Apollonius succumbed to these conventions, Vergil rose superior to them. The question of his management of the divine machinery has already been discussed. Another instance may be found in his treatment of battles. He avoids them as far as possible, but they were part of the epic tradition and could not be entirely neglected. The passages imitated from the *Iliad* are frankly dull, but they are generally short; they serve merely as interludes between the great tragic narratives, in which Vergil's sense of pathos has full scope.

Again, Vergil was quite as learned a poet as Apollonius, and his age also demanded learning. The *Æneid* is a storehouse of knowledge of all kinds, but it is kept in a subordinate position. Ætiology is appropriate in a poem, in which the primary interest is ætiological, but

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Vergil is never betrayed by it into irrelevant narratives. Like Apollonius, he was interested in geography and loved place-names, but he has far more skill in using them. Moreover, all his allusions are so carefully veiled that the casual reader need not observe them at all.

The technical superiority of the *Æneid* may thus be regarded as due to Vergil's constructive skill and selective power. That these qualities were carefully and deliberately cultivated by him will be obvious to any reader who will make a critical study of the third Book in comparison with one of the later ones, the eighth for example. He discovered the requirements of an epic by the practical method of writing one, and, the technique once mastered, his sense of fitness kept him on the right path. Where Apollonius could offer in place of the epyllion only an extension of epyllion form, Vergil produced a real epic, which was neither the epic of Homer nor the epyllion of Alexandria, yet preserved certain merits of both.

The triumph of the Vergilian epic was speedy and complete. Epics were henceforth considered both possible and desirable, and even Ovid preferred to give his epyllia the appearance of epic unity. The *Metamorphoses* indeed constituted the final stage in the revival of the long poem. When the very form consecrated to the short epic had been used to construct a poem in fifteen books, it was manifestly absurd to return to the Alexandrian standards.¹ Vergil and Ovid had given rise to a new

¹ There is one post-Vergilian epyllion, the *Andromeda*, which occurs at the end of the fourth Book of Manilius' *Astronomica*. It is probably post-Ovidian, for it recalls Ovid in many respects. It is of the simplest

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tradition, based, indeed, on that of Alexandria, but branching out into new developments, which the narrow and formal art of Alexandria could never have produced without the inspiration of Roman genius.

Ovidian type without digression or dramatic form, but narrative rather than idyllic. It has a certain merit, but is of no importance in the history of epic form.

NOTE I

THE ORDER OF THE COLUMNS ON THE RAINER BOARD

To the discussion of the Rainer fragments of the *Hecale* by Theodor Gomperz is added an *Excursus* by Joseph Zingerle dealing with the palæography. He argues that the four columns were not written, and consequently should not be read, in their present order. The principal points of his argument are as follows.

Internal evidence points to the fact that the lines in Column I. lead immediately to the conclusion of the poem, since the scene described follows the fight with the bull. We can hardly suppose that the poem closed with the series of Attic myths which are found in Columns II. and III. Column I. therefore contained the final lines of the *Hecale*.

This conclusion is supported by palæographical considerations. The writing is the work of two distinct hands, Columns I. and IV. being in one hand, and Columns II. and III. in another. Column I. is a palimpsest. The columns are separated from one another by lines, and it is clear that the line which divides Columns I. and II. was drawn before the original writing of Column I. was erased. Column I., therefore, was originally in the same hand as Columns II. and III.; the writer of Column IV., who wished to finish copying the poem, erased the passage in Column I. and wrote the lines which now stand there. Further proof lies in the fact that the original writing completely filled the available space, but in the opening lines of the present Column I. the letters are crowded and do not reach the dividing line; thus the writer clearly had a limited space at his disposal and was afraid of exceeding it.

The Columns on the Rainer Board

Zingerle's internal evidence has no value whatever. It has already been shown that the climax of the poem must have been the meeting of Theseus with the funeral procession of Hecale, and that some account of the rites of Zeus Hecaleius probably followed. The missing lines of Column I. do not allow sufficient space for such a narrative, even if there were no account of the rites. The argument that a digression would not follow at this point would be sound, if there were any real evidence that Column I. contained the final lines of the story of Hecale; but, as has been shown, the actual evidence is against such a theory.

The deductions from the palæographical details are ingenious, but do not rest on any certain evidence. The board was evidently for use in a school, and there is no difficulty in imagining circumstances which would account for the two hands and for the order of the copying. The first writer might have been called away, and have left the work to another until he returned. Moreover, Zingerle's theory appears to require that the whole of the first column should have been the work of a single hand; but on this point there is no evidence whatever.

Column I. is a palimpsest, but we do not know what its earlier contents were. Nothing is more likely than that a board used in a school would be used more than once, and there is no necessity to suppose that the erased passage in the first column had anything to do with its present contents.

If the first vertical line is earlier than the present Column I., it still does not follow that Column II. was written before Column I. If a man knows that he has to fit a passage of a certain length into a given space, he naturally calculates the arrangement of the writing, and is quite likely to divide the space into columns before beginning to write. This might easily result in narrow spacing of the handwriting; but as a matter of fact the facsimiles show that the first writer on

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the whole used a rather narrower spacing in the fourth column, where he had plenty of room, than in the first, where the space was limited.

There is nothing in the appearance of the board which cannot be quite easily and naturally explained on the assumption that the order of the columns is correct. A further point may be suggested in support of this assumption. If the board was used in a school, we should expect it to contain passages of some special interest in literary study. Gomperz remarks on the fact that the passage from the *Hecale* is rich in mythological allusions, and adds that the extract on the reverse side is taken from one of the most read plays of Euripides.¹ But we may go further than this. The passage from the *Hecale* contains the digression. If we suppose that the extract was designed for the instruction of advanced pupils, perhaps in a school of rhetoric, the reason for the choice becomes clear. The master was dealing with epyllion form, and selected from the most famous of the Greek epyllia the digression with the lines immediately preceding and following it. The fact that a copy was made suggests that a detailed study of the use of digressions was intended.

¹ The lines actually preserved are *Phanissa* 1097-1107 and 1126-1137. This is part of the messenger's speech describing the advance of the Seven Champions against Thebes. The board could not have contained the whole of the speech, but clearly did contain the description of the Seven.

NOTE II

LOST GREEK EPYLLIA

Names, authors and even some fragments of lost Greek epyllia are known, but details are so scanty that it is impossible to arrive at any definite conclusion about their character or value. The most important of them may be mentioned.

Apollonius Rhodius wrote several epic poems dealing with the foundations of cities; the titles actually quoted refer to Alexandria, Caunus, Cnidus, Naucratis, Rhodes and Lesbos.¹ These were probably epyllia, for it is hardly likely that he composed six long epics in addition to the *Argonautica*. A few short fragments exist, and Parthenius quotes one longer passage from "the writer of the *Founding of Lesbos*."² It contains the story of Achilles and Pisidice, which closely resembles that of Minos and Scylla; this poem may have suggested points to the author of the *Ciris*. The *Foundation of Caunus* included the stories of Lyncus and Byblis, both of which are told by Parthenius³ and attributed to Apollonius. Probably these poems were primarily ætiological, and may therefore not have been formal epyllia.

Nicænetus also wrote *Lyncus*, an epic poem on the foundation of Caunus, from which Parthenius quotes a passage on Byblis.⁴ As Nicænetus and Apollonius are jointly quoted as authorities for Parthenius' stories of Lyncus and Byblis, it may be assumed that the poets covered the same ground. Nicænetus gives an unusual version of the story of Byblis, making Caunus fall in love with her and flee from his native

¹ *Collectanea Alexandrina*, pp. 5-8.

² *Erot. Path.*, xxi.

³ *Erot. Path.*, i and xi.

⁴ *Erot. Path.*, xi.

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land in consequence. Other writers preferred the more sensational form of the story.

There are also certain papyrus fragments of epyllia,¹ notably a long and much mutilated passage of an epyllion on Diomedes. It appears to have been a poem of some merit, related rather to the earlier than to the later type. Other fragments may have belonged to epyllia on Actæon, Telephus and Andromeda.

There is nothing to be gained by conjecture on these fragments. They are often interesting in themselves, but we have not enough evidence to estimate either their relation to the extant Greek epyllia or their influence, if any, on the Latin poets. The *κρίσις* poem may have been a type apart; it does not seem to have influenced Latin epyllion to any great extent, since the foundations of cities narrated in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* seem to have been chosen rather for their romantic than for their ætiological interest.

¹ *Collectanea Alexandrina*, pp. 71-89.

NOTE III

THE CULEX AND THE ARISTÆUS

It is an interesting point, and possibly a further argument in favour of the Vergilian authorship of the *Culex*, that its construction has a marked resemblance to that of the *Aristæus*.

Each poem is an epyllion consisting of a main subject and a digression; the digression is of some length, but shorter than the main subject; the main subject is resumed at the end of the digression.

The main subject in the *Culex* is purely pastoral; that of the *Aristæus* has many pastoral elements; the hero is a shepherd and the chief motive—the loss of the bees—is a pastoral one. The treatment in both instances is idyllic rather than epic.

Both digressions arise naturally from the main subject. The description of the underworld is natural as part of the lamentation of the gnat; the story of Orpheus is related as a consequence of the sin of Aristæus; each digression takes the form of a narrative by a character of the main story and each contains the consequences of the act of the person to whom it is narrated.

Both digressions are epic in character and both contain an account of the underworld. In the *Culex* the gloom of the digression is strongly contrasted with the brightness of the pastoral scenes which precede and follow it, and the happiness of the shepherd saved from death is balanced by the misery of the gnat who has lost life and its joys. The same contrast is found in the *Aristæus*. The pictures of the main subject are cheerful and the loss of Aristæus is repaired.

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The digression is entirely tragic and the loss of Orpheus has no remedy. The tragedy in both cases is heightened by the fact that the suffering of the hero is caused unintentionally by the fault of another.

In the *Aristaeus* the digression contains the real climax of the poem. This was probably intended in the *Culex* also, but the technique of the author was not sufficiently advanced to handle a climax skilfully. Both poems end with a short concluding resumption of the main subject. Each conclusion is a rapid, unemotional account of the rites paid to the dead; the *Culex* ends with a really graceful picture of the mound with its flowers and epitaph, the *Aristaeus* with a description of the bees rising from the dead ox. Such rapid resumption of narrative after a climax is found twice in the *Aeneid* as the conclusion of a book.¹

¹ vi., 886-901. xi., 896-915.

NOTE IV

METRICAL TESTS OF THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE CULEX AND CIRIS

THE practice of using metrical tests to decide the authorship of disputed poems is becoming increasingly prevalent. It is unfortunate, however, that any two critics using the same test may arrive at totally opposite conclusions. This disagreement is, no doubt, partially due to the uncertainty of the whole subject. But two essential considerations seem to have been generally neglected.

Firstly, the Latin hexameter is capable of so much variation that short passages are useless for purposes of comparison. In considering the metrical peculiarities of any poem, the *whole* poem should be analysed.

Secondly, if the comparison of different poems or groups involves large or complicated collections of figures, it is necessary to submit the material to a statistician. Otherwise the true value of the figures may be misunderstood or overlooked.

Metrical tests, whether for authorship or date, are valueless, unless their evidence is well supported by other evidence. That is to say that the result of a metrical test may supply valuable confirmation of a theory already well supported, but cannot be accepted as independent evidence.

A marked metrical peculiarity may give grounds for assigning a poem to an author, who possesses the same peculiarity; but other and stronger evidence will be required. We cannot assume that any peculiarity is confined to a single poet. Moreover, young poets, whose style has not matured, are frequently imitative, and adopt from other

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poets characteristics, which are often completely lacking in their later verse. This makes metrical evidence particularly untrustworthy with regard to early works. Again, if a poet is for any period associated with a particular school, his poems during that period will tend to reproduce the characteristics of that school.

Metrical characteristics may be useful in determining date. For example, an undated poem by a known author may sometimes be approximately dated by a comparison with the metre of his dated works. But again such evidence requires support, for a poet may sometimes return to an earlier manner; or the revision of an early poem may give it many characteristics of a later work.

In considering the relation of a doubtful poem to Vergil's known works two points must be observed.

1.—The Latin hexameter from Cicero to Ovid tends to increase the number of dactyls. The percentage of lines in which spondees exceed dactyls is 55.6 in Cicero's *Aratea* and 60.2 in the *Peleus and Thetis* of Catullus, as against 39.8 in the *Æneid*. The proportion in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is still smaller. In Vergil's work, however, the tendency is the other way, the *Eclogues* having a proportion of 30.9 per cent. of lines in which spondees exceed dactyls, as against 39.6 per cent. and 39.8 per cent. in the *Georgics* and *Æneid*. Dactyls exceed spondees in these works in the following percentages of lines:

Cicero,	<i>Aratea</i> ...	...	11.6%
Catullus,	<i>Peleus and Thetis</i>	...	6.6%
Vergil,	<i>Eclogues</i> ...	...	25.1%
"	<i>Georgics</i> ...	...	18.8%
"	<i>Æneid</i> ...	...	19.1%

It thus appears that Vergil's early work contains a considerably larger number of dactylic lines than do the poems of his maturity.

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2.—Owing to Vergil's method of composition with its constant revision his works must be examined as three groups—*Eclogues*, *Georgics*, *Æneid*. The *whole* of each group must be taken as representative of its period, and it will not be possible to apply tests to any part of a group with a view to determining its date.¹

The ideal metrical test would be one dealing with a characteristic produced unconsciously and without consideration of the style of the poem. Such a characteristic probably does not occur in the work of any poet. In the distribution of feet, however, there is probably a very large unconscious element, and for this reason an examination of it appears likely to give some definite result.

A test on these lines was worked out by Dr. Siegfried Lederer in *Ist Vergil der Verfasser von Culex und Ciris* (Leipzig, 1890). He gives tables of the actual numbers and percentages of the occurrence of each of the possible sixteen types of dactylic hexameter in the *Culex*, *Ciris*, *Eclogues*, *Georgics* and *Æneid*; and also a table of the percentages of the occurrence of dactyls and spondees in the first four feet. He does not, however, go beyond a comparison of percentages.

I owe the following conclusions to the kindness of Dr. R. A. Fisher, F.R.S., Head of the Statistical Department at the Rothamsted Agricultural Experimental Station. His test is based on the figures given by Dr. Lederer in his tables of the occurrence of different types of line. He establishes by statistical methods that the four *Georgics* are homogeneous as far as the frequencies of the sixteen different types of line are concerned, but that the three groups, *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, *Æneid*, are not homogeneous in this sense.

¹ Skutsch's metrical tests made on passages of 100 lines are without value. The varieties in the Vergilian hexameter are so numerous that two passages of 100 lines may differ considerably from one another and from a percentage taken on the whole poem.

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He has then used fifteen different comparisons based on the frequency and arrangement of feet in the first four divisions of the line. These are as follows:

	Number of Comparisons.	
Group 1	4	Frequency of dactyls in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th feet.
Group 2	6	Like and unlike feet for each of the six pairs.
Group 3	4	3 or 1 against 2 or 0 dactyls in the four groups of three feet.
Group 4	1	4, 2, or 0 against 3 or 1 dactyls in the four feet.

He finds that in eight of fifteen cases the three groups, *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, *Æneid*, are homogeneous, in five heterogeneous, and in two doubtful. The *Georgics* and the *Æneid* are much more clearly like one another than either is to the *Eclogues*; it is not clear which of them most resembles the *Eclogues*.

In the comparisons of the five heterogeneous cases, which are the more important comparisons for fixing the date of a poem admittedly Vergil's, the *Culex* favours the *Eclogues* in four. In one it is nearer to the *Georgics* and *Æneid*.¹ The *Ciris* resembles the *Georgics* and *Æneid* in three cases out of five.

His conclusion is as follows: "As far as the classification by type of line goes, there seems no reason to reject the *Culex* as Vergil's; the first and third feet are more frequently unlike than in any of the larger works; otherwise it conforms well to the constant features. In the changing features it resembles the *Eclogues*, but is strongly aberrant in the fourth foot, where it may be regarded as giving an exaggerated foretaste of the later style. The *Ciris* does not conform so well to the constant features; there are too few dactyls in the

¹ In the percentage of dactyls in the 4th foot, which is relatively high in the *Eclogues*. This is probably due to the preference for a dactyl in the 4th foot in pastoral poetry.

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third foot, and the first and fourth feet are not so often alike as in the longer poems. If Vergil's, it must be regarded as an aberrant form for any period; it most resembles the *Æneid* and the *Georgics*, but is not close to them."

Apart from these tests there are two points in which the *Culex* appears to resemble the *Eclogues* and to differ from the work of Cicero and Catullus on the one hand and the *Georgics* and *Æneid* on the other.

1.—The *Culex* agrees with the *Eclogues* in containing a larger percentage of lines in which dactyls exceed spondees¹ and a smaller percentage in which spondees exceed dactyls.² The percentages for the two are very close.

2.—The most frequently occurring line in the *Georgics* and *Æneid* is d s s. This line is also the most frequent in Cicero and Catullus. In the *Eclogues* and the *Culex* the most frequent is d d s.

To these may be added the point noticed by Dr. Warde Fowler,³ that the *Culex* agrees with the *Eclogues* in allowing a monosyllable as the first syllable of the fifth foot; this peculiarity is common in Lucretius, but rare in Vergil's mature work.

The evidence in itself is in no way conclusive with regard to authorship or date. At the same time there is no point in it which suggests that the *Culex* is not Vergil's, and the character of the resemblance to the *Eclogues* suggests that, if it is Vergil's, the tradition, which makes it a very early work, is correct. As the external evidence for the Vergilian authorship is very good, the metrical evidence may be regarded as significant.

The same tests applied to the *Ciris* do not tend to confirm the theory of Vergilian authorship. In the distribution of

¹ *Culex*, 22.8 per cent. *Eclogues*, 25.1 per cent.

² *Culex*, 30.6 per cent. *Eclogues*, 30.9 per cent.

³ *A Metrical Peculiarity in the Culex. Classical Review*, 1919, p. 95

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feet Dr. Fisher regards it as an aberrant form for any period of Vergil's work. In the proportion of spondees over dactyls it closely resembles the *Georgics* and *Æneid*; yet, if it is Vergil's, it must belong to the early period. The most frequently occurring line is d s s s as in the *Georgics* and *Æneid*. The monosyllable at the beginning of the fifth line is rare.

If the *Ciris* is Vergil's, the metre suggests that the earliest possible date is later than the *Eclogues*; but the lack of external evidence for his authorship makes it difficult to believe that it could have been written by him after his work had become known and popular. Moreover, as has been pointed out, the frequency of the spondaic ending,¹ which is contrary to Vergil's practice, suggests an earlier date. On the whole, then, the evidence of metre is rather against than for the Vergilian authorship.

TABLE OF PERCENTAGES OF EQUAL AND UNEQUAL LINES IN
THE POEMS COMPARED

				<i>Spondees exceeding dactyls.</i>	<i>Dactyls exceeding spondees.</i>	<i>Equal.</i>
Cicero, <i>Aratea</i>	...	...	...	55.6	11.6	32.7
Catullus, <i>Peleus and Thetis</i>	...	...	...	60.2	6.6	33.2
<i>Ciris</i>	...	...	...	42.1	19.3	38.6
<i>Culex</i>	...	...	...	30.6	22.8	46.6
Vergil, <i>Eclogues</i>	...	...	...	30.9	25.1	44
Vergil, <i>Georgics</i>	...	...	...	39.6	18.8	41.7
Vergil, <i>Æneid</i>	...	...	...	39.8	19.1	41.1

¹ The spondaic ending does not occur at all in the *Culex*.

NOTE V

NARRATIVE ELEGY AND EPYLLION

In the preface to his *Love Romances* Parthenius offers his stories as suitable subjects for epic or elegiac verse. It is thus clear that the same type of subject was regarded as suitable for either epyllion or narrative elegy. The history of Alexandrian and Roman elegy and the place of narrative in it would in itself be a long and interesting study. It is only necessary here to consider the main points of distinction between a narrative elegy and an epyllion.

The loss of nearly all the elegiac work of Alexandria necessarily causes any enquiry to be largely a matter of conjecture. But it seems clear that the difference is very far from being merely a difference of metre. It would appear from the existing evidence that, whereas the story, whether as a subject for description or narrative, was always the sole purpose of the epyllion, it was regularly used in elegy either as an illustration or as an explanation.¹ In the extant examples of elegy narrative is almost entirely used either in love poems to enlarge upon some point, or in ætiological poems to give the cause of some name or custom. It appears also to have been used in hymns, if Callimachus' *Bath of Pallas* is a typical instance; but it is not known whether hymns were commonly written in elegiac verse. The story of Teiresias, however, is a typical elegiac narrative, since it is used as an example to enforce a warning. Ovid also uses narrative in the *Heroides*, whose form appar-

¹ Elegies frequently take the form of a narrative of the poet's experiences, but these form another class. The present discussion deals only with mythological subjects.

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ently was his own invention; but here again the narrative is incidental.

A narrative illustrating a love-story occurs in two instances in Latin. Catullus in his elegy to Allius compares his lady to Laodamia, and tells part of her story.¹ The passage is full of allusions and digressions, and much of it is descriptive, but it may fairly be classed as narrative. Propertius also has an elegy containing the story of Hylas,² which is used to point a warning and occupies most of the poem. It has very much the character of the *Hylas* of Theocritus, and suggests that the narrative portion of a love elegy may have differed very little from the epic idyll except in metre.

The *Aitia* of Callimachus probably set the fashion of using elegiac metre for ætiological poems. Narrative is a necessary part of such works, and its use is amply shown in Ovid's *Fasti*. Propertius also wrote several ætiological elegies, and two of these³ are entirely narrative, each containing a single story worked out with some elaboration. These may have been passages designed for a poem on Roman ætiology, but, as all his ætiological elegies are complete in themselves, it is possible that they were intended as separate poems.

There are many traces of narrative in the fragments of Greek elegy, but most of the passages are too short to give any certain evidence. The Acontius and Cydippe fragment of the *Aitia*⁴ proves that Callimachus, like Ovid, made use of long narrative passages. It is also certain that elegiac catalogues contained narratives. The long fragment of Hermesianax,⁵ which is a catalogue of lovers, has a passage of fourteen lines on the story of Orpheus and his wife; and the long fragment from the *Ἐρωτες* of Phanocles⁶ narrates the death of Orpheus. Parthenius also quotes a long

¹ Cat., lxviii., 73-130.

² Prop., i., 20.

³ Prop., iv., 4 and 9.

⁴ *Call.*, Loeb Class. Series, pp. 204 ff.

⁵ *Collectanea Alexandrina*, Herm., fr. 7, 1-14.

⁶ *Collectanea Alexandrina*, Phan., fr. 1.

Narrative Elegy and Epyllion

passage from the *Apollo* of Alexander Ætolus;¹ this poem appears to have been a catalogue of prophecies. It may be assumed that narratives also appeared in didactic poems.

Though Parthenius declares that his stories are suitable for elegy, very few of them are certainly assigned to elegiac sources. Two are ascribed to the *Leontium* of Hermesianax,² one, already mentioned, to the *Apollo* of Alexander Ætolus and one to the elegiac poems of Diodorus,³ a poet who is otherwise unknown. In view of this and of the fact that there are few narrative elegies in Latin, it seems likely that long narratives were comparatively rare except in ætiological poems. It may also be supposed that they were shorter and simpler in structure than epyllia, and that the poet's motive was never solely to tell a story. Elegiac verse, with its tendency to fall into separate couplets, did not easily lend itself to narrative, and the poets, who wished to treat a plot with any complexity, naturally turned to epic forms.

¹ Parth., *Erot. Path.*, xiv.

² *Erot. Path.*, v. and xxii.

³ *Erot. Path.*, xv.

NOTE VI

TABLE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE METAMORPHOSES

A. MAIN DIVISIONS AND SUBJECT GROUPS

INTRODUCTION. The Creation and Deluge i., 1-451

DIVISION I. TALES OF THE GODS. LOVES

AND REVENGES

i., 452-vi., 420

Group 1. Loves of the Gods. i., 452-ii., 875

Group 2. Thebes and Bacchus. iii., 1-iv., 606

Link. Perseus. iv., 607-v., 249

Group 3. Revenges of the Gods. v., 250-vi., 420
3836 lines

DIVISION II. HEROES AND HEROINES vi., 421-xi., 193

Group 1. Athens. vi., 421-ix., 100

Link. Hercules. ix., 101-449

Group 2. Love-stories. ix., 450-xi., 84

Link. Midas. ix., 84-193
3774 lines

DIVISION III. HISTORICAL. LAOMEDON

TO CÆSAR. xi., 194-xv., 879

Group 1. Troy. xi., 194-xiii., 622

Group 2. Æneas. xiii., 623-xiv., 608

Group 3. Alba and Rome. xiv., 608-xv., 879
3927 lines

DIVISION I. Two main themes

(a) The quarrels of Juppiter and Juno.

(b) The punishment of presumption.

Construction of the Metamorphoses

DIVISION II. Main Theme. Love Romances.

In these two groups the chronological arrangement is often broken.

DIVISION III. Main theme. Historical Legends.

In this group the arrangement is chronological.

B. EPYLLIA IN THE METAMORPHOSES.

Names in italics = true epyllia. () = digressions.

INTRODUCTION. *Creation and Deluge. (Lycaon).*

Link. Reproduction of Life. Python and Apollo.

DIVISION I. TALES OF THE GODS.

Group 1. Loves of the Gods.

- i. *Daphne.*
 - ii. *Io. (Syrinx.)*
 - iii. *Phaethon. Episodes:* Sisters of Phaethon. Cycnus.
 - iv. *Callisto.*
 - v. *Coronis. (The Crow. Erichthonius.) Episode:* Ocyrhoë.
 - vi. *Aglauros. Episode:* Battus.
- Link.* Europa.

Great Digression. Phaethon, son of Clymene and Apollo.

Group 2. Thebes and Bacchus.

- i. *Cadmus.*
 - ii. *Atteon.*
 - iii. *Semele. Episode:* Teiresias.
 - iv. *Narcissus. (Echo.)*
 - v. *Pentheus. (Acætes.)*
 - vi. *The Minyæiades. (Pyramus*, Clytie*, Salmacis*.)*
 - vii. *Ino. Episodes:* The Companions of Ino, Cadmus.
- Link.* *Perseus. (Medusa.)* Pallas and the Muses.
- Great Digressions.* Narcissus. Stories told by the Minyæiades.

* Long Digressions equivalent to separate epyllia.

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Group 3. Revenges of the Gods.

Pyreneus.

Link. The Nine Maidens.

i. *Ceres.* (*Arethusa.*) *Episodes:* Cyane, The Rude Boy, Ascalaphus, Companions of Proserpina, Trip-tolemus and Lyncus.

ii. *Arachne* (*Founding of Athens, Punishment of Presumption, Metamorphoses of the Gods*).

iii. *Niobe.*

iv. *Leto and the Countrymen.* *Episodes:* Marsyas, Pelops.

Link. The Mourning for Amphion. Athens took no part.

Great Digression. Ceres; but several of the episodes return to the main theme.

DIVISION II. HEROES AND HEROINES.

Group 1. Athens.

i. *Procne and Philomela.* *Episode:* Orithyia.

ii. *Medea.* *Episode:* Medea in Athens.

Link. War with Crete. Embassies to Æacus.

iii. *The Myrmidons.*

iv. *Procris.* (*The Dog Lalaps.*)

v. *Scylla.*

vi. *Dædalus.* (*Ariadne.*) *Episode:* Perdix.

vii. *Meleager.* *Episodes:* Visit of Theseus and his Companions to Achelous. The Echinades.

viii. *Philemon and Baucis.*

xi. *Erysichthon.*

x. *Achelous and Hercules.*

Link. *Death of Hercules.* *Episode:* Birth of Hercules.

Dryope. *Episode:* Renewal of youth.

Great Digressions. Medea. Myrmidons. Stories told in the house of Achelous.

Group 2. Love-stories.

i. *Byblis.*

Construction of the Metamorphoses

ii. *Iphis and Ianthé.*

iii. *Orpheus.* (*Hyacinthus**, *Pygmalion**, *Myrrha**, *Adonis**.) (*Atalanta.*) *Episodes:* *Cyparissus*, *Ganymede*, *Cerastæ*, *Propætides*, *The Edonian Women.*

Link. *Bacchus. Midas. Apollo.*

No Great Digression.

DIVISION III. HISTORICAL. LAOMEDON TO CÆSAR.

Group 1. Troy.

Laomedon.

Peleus and Thetis.

i. *Peleus and Ceyx.* (*Dædalion.*)

ii. *Alcyone. Episode:* *Æsacus.*

The Greeks attack Troy.

iii. *Cygnus.*

Link. *The Greek Feast.*

iv. *Cæneus. Episode:* *Periclymenus.*

v. *The Arms of Achilles.*

vi. *Hecuba. Episode:* *Memnon.*

Great Digressions. *Alcyone. Cæneus.*

Group 2. Æneas.

Troy. Thrace. Delos. Episode. *Anius.*

Delos. Crete. The Strophades. Buthrotus.

Sicily.

i. *Galatea.*

ii. *Scylla.* (*Glaucus.*)

Carthage. Sicily. Cumæ. Episodes: *The Sibyl.*

Achæmenides.

iii. *Ulysses and Circe.* (*Picus.*)

Caieta. Laurentum. Pallanteum. Episodes: *Dio-*

mede. The Oleaster. The Ships of Æneas.

Apotheosis of Æneas.

* Long Digressions equivalent to separate epyllia.

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Great Digressions. The three epyllia: the main theme consists entirely of short episodes.

Group 3. Alba and Rome.

The Alban Kings.

i. *Pomona. (Iphis and Anaxarete.)*

Founding of Rome. War with Sabines.

Apotheosis of Romulus.

Numa. *Episode:* Founding of Croton.

Pythagoras.

ii. *Pythagorean Doctrine and Marvels of Nature.*

Death of Numa. Egeria. *Episode:* Hippolytus.

Metamorphosis of Egeria. *Episode:* Cypus.

iii. *The coming of Æsculapius.*

iv. *Death and Apotheosis of Cæsar. (Achievements of Augustus.)*

Great Digression. Pythagorean Doctrine and Marvels of Nature. Not an epyllion, but occupying the place of one.

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